The Magazine for Golden Age, Silver Age, & Bronze Age Collectors!

COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE

No. 72
Oct. 1999

MARVEL'S WEIRD ONE-SHOT

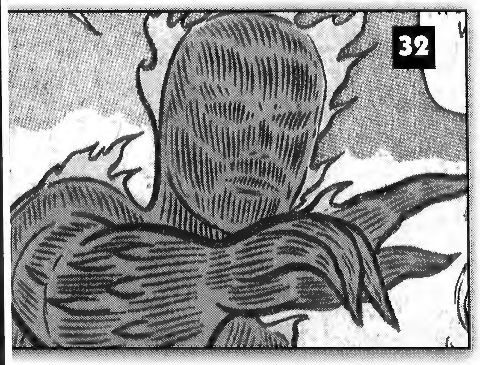
Iron Man & Sub-Mariner

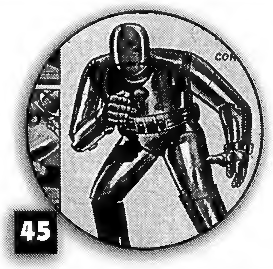
Special Appegrance By
The Silver Age Human To

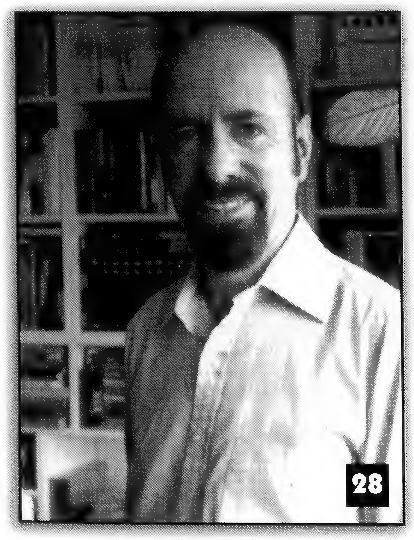
$5.95 U.S./$8.95 Can.
A GEMSTONE PUBLICATION
ALL CHARACTERS & ART © 1999 MEG

CONTENTS

NUMBER 72 Oct. 1999







FEATURES

Journey into Strange Tales of Suspense to Astonish!
Cringe before me puny mortal! by Will Murray 22

The Iron Man Mystery!
Tales of Suspense #39 has the wrong date? 24

Marvel's Mystery Man, Larry Lieber!
Part I: Lo, there was a beginning! by Arnold T. Blumberg 28

Johnny Storm's Alter-Identity Crisis!
"It's a good thing the town isn't aware of my secret identity!" by Tony Seybert 32

Man in the Iron Mask!
A tribute to ol' Shellhead! by J.C. Vaughn 45

The Amazing Aqua-Mariner!
When is a Sub-Mariner story really an Aquaman story? by Mike Wilbur 46

COLUMNS

Adventures Into Weird Words
Uncanny Comics! by Pat S. Calhoun 13

Nolan's Notebook
Michelle again asks... 'Do they exist?' by Michelle Nolan 17

CBM News Brief
Carving up Superman! by Matt Brady 49

Naiman Report & Market Reports
Who's smirking now? by Michael Naiman 64

CBM MarketWatch
Our monthly report of market indicator sales 65

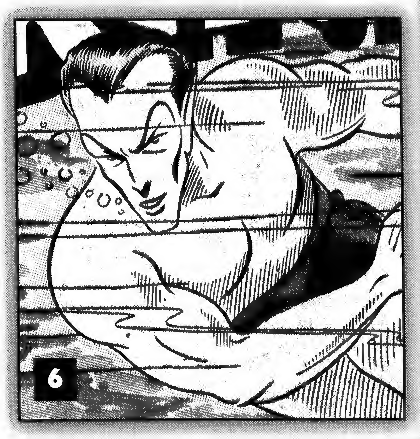
CBM Photo Scrapbook
AACC's Batman Bash! 71

Volume 2 • Number 72
October 1999
A Gemstone Publication

ON THE COVER
A close-up of the cover art used on Marvel's weirdest one-shot... **Iron Man and Sub-Mariner #1** (Apr 1968)

DEPARTMENTS

Letter from the Editor 6
Marketplace Mail 8
Subscriptions 8
Back Issues 10
Advertising Info.....70



PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Comic Book Marketplace – Gemstone Publishing, Inc. copyright ©1999 Stephen A. Geppi, all rights reserved under international and Pan-American copyright conventions. The information in this publication is protected under U.S. copyright law. Absolutely no part of this publication maybe reproduced in any form whatsoever (including mechanically, photographically, and/or electronically), without the prior written consent of the publisher. All articles and columns are the express opinion of the individual contributing artists and authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Gemstone Publishing, Comic Book Marketplace, its staff, or its advertisers. All characters, names, logos, trademarks, and symbols depicted and/or described in articles and other editorial material are owned and copyrighted by their individual companies. Inquiries regarding this publication (including advertising) and letters to the editor should be addressed to: Comic Book Marketplace, c/o Gemstone Publishing, Inc. (West), P.O. Box 180700, Coronado, CA 92178-0700, telephone **(619) 437-1996** FAX (619) 437-1993. First class subscription $60 (USA, residents of Missouri and Maryland add applicable sales tax); $62 (Canada and Mexico, US funds); $110 (United Kingdom and Western Europe, US funds); $120 (Japan and Philippines, US funds). Advertising and subscription rates may change without notice. **Issue Number #72, October 1999**

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Sub-Mariner... not Submarine-er!

Some years ago I was heading up the AACC Grading Committee for Sotheby's Auction House in New York. That particular year I was lucky enough hold in my hands the "pay copy" of *Marvel Comics* #1 (1939). (A "pay copy" is used as a guide for for reimbursing contributors and contains notations as to which artists and writers are to be paid for their work, how much they're paid, and for what. The pay copy of *Marvel* #1 had just such notations, even including check numbers! As you might guess, pay copies are invaluable to researchers and historians.)

While we graded the issue, a few on the committee related the history of early Marvel, including the origin of Marvel's first comic. They began the story, "Martin Goodman, owner of the Marvel pulp empire, one day decided to get into the exploding field of comic book publishing."

They further explained, "In the late summer of 1939, Lloyd Jacquet, Bill Everett, Carl Burgos, and others were asked to put together a comic book (to be called *Marvel Comics* #1 named for the pulp magazine publishing group). The caveat was that the 64-page book had to be written and drawn in an extremely short time frame, starting mid week, working over the weekend, and turned in on Monday for press-time on Tuesday!

"So Bill Everett invited Carl Burgos and others artists and writers to his New York apartment to write and draw the first issue. Legend has it that Everett spent most of that famous weekend in the bathtub (to stay cool) working on the 12-page Subby story with a board laid across the tub to provide a drawing surface. A dozen other creators found places to work in nearly every nook and cranny throughout the apartment, writing, drawing... and drinking their way right through that amazing weekend.

"Miracle of miracles, the team handed in the finished 60 plus pages on Monday, the book went to press on time, and *Marvel Comics* #1 hit the stands in September 1939 and was cover dated October. Follow-on issues of *Marvel* #1 were later printed with the 'Oct' on the cover overprinted and changed to 'Nov', thus we have two versions today... the October issues, which are considered the rarest, and the 'November overprint' editions."

Since that day looking through the *Marvel* #1 pay copy, I've been fascinated by the legend of Bill Everett, his premiere character Sub-Mariner, the early history of Timely, and the ongoing controversy surrounding *Motion Picture Funnies Weekly* regarding Subby's first appearance (a topic which I'll save for another day). In pursuit of info, I reread my old copy of *Alter Ego* #11 (1978, with its wonderful Bill Everett interview), and everything I could find on the topic.

From these sources I learned that Everett began his work career by joining the Merchant Marine at the tender age of 15, leaving the service at 17. He eventually attended art school during the mid 1930s, and then went to work for Centaur where he met young Carl Burgos. His first strip was Skyrocket Steele and later he created Amazing Man with Lloyd Jacquet, Centaur's editor. Jacquet, Everett, Burgos, sales manager Frank Torpey, and a few others formed the nucleus of Funnies Incorporated, a comic book packaging house. Torpey was an acquaintance of Martin Goodman. *(Continued on page 61)*

COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE

EDITOR
Gary M.Carter

ART DIRECTOR
Lisa M.Carter

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Pat S. Calhoun

MARKET REPORT COORDINATOR
Michael Naiman

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Scotty Moore • Phil Barnhart

COPY EDITORS
Beth Holley • Amanda Kitzmiller

OFFICE & SUBSCRIPTION MANAGER
Amanda Kitzmiller

RESEARCH CONSULTANTS
Joe McGuckin • Mike Wilbur

MAGAZINE CONSULTANTS
Joe Sikoryak • Bill Howard

TECHNICAL CONSULTANTS
Mark Haynes • Arnie Sawyer

MARKETING DIRECTOR
J. C. Vaughn

GEMSTONE WEBSITE & E-MAIL ADDRESS
www.gemstonepub.com
cbm@gemstonepub.com

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS AND ARTISTS
Murphy Anderson • Mark Arnold
Stephen Barrington • Alan Bartholomew
Dave Blanchard • Christian Blees
Bob Brodsky • Mark Burbey • Quinton Clem
John Clements • John Coates • Steve Cooper
Mike Curtis • John DeMocko • Tony Didio
Duane Dimock • Rich Donnelly • John Fallon
Creig Flessel • Fabio Gadducci
Catherine Garnier • Jeff Gelb • Stephen Gentner
Rolf Gerdau • Tony Gleeson • Dave Grisez
Jim Hambrick • Shawn Hamilton
Kevin Hanley • Tracey Heft • Roger Hill
Terry Hoknes • Jim Kealy • Douglas R. Kelly
Chris Knowles • Patrick Kochanek • David Krell
Mark Magarity • Sam Maronie • Jon McClure
Lou Mougin • Will Murray • Matt Nelson
Michelle Nolan • Myls Putnam • Gene Reed
Arlen Schumer • David W. Smith • Tony Starks
Mirko Tavosanis • Roy Thomas • Eric Vignolles
Mark Voger • Murray R. Ward • Paul Wardle
Lynn Woolley • Nicky Wright

EDITORS EMERITUS
Stan Lee • Julie Schwartz

PACIFIC COMIC EXCHANGE, INC.

P.O. BOX 2629, Palos Verdes Pen., CA 90274 ❖ Tel: (310) 544-4936 ❖ Fax: (310) 544-4900 ❖ www.pcei.com ❖ E-mail: sales@pcei.com

INSTRUCTIONS: The following books are currently listed on the Exchange and are available for sale at the prices specified. Prices are subject to change without notice. All orders are subject to a ***12% buyers commission.*** The grade listed is the **OVERSTREET Grade.** Books may be returned (must be undamaged) if not satisfied and we are notified within 5 days of receipt by ***telephone.*** Payment can be made by **money order** or **check** and is due within 5 business days of order. California residents please add 8 1/4% sales tax.

PgQ: Page Quality (White: 0.0, 1, 2, 2.5, 3, Near White: 3.3, Off White: 3.5, Beige or Cream Color: 4.0, Light to Dark Tan: 4.5-7.0, Brittle 7.5 to 9.5). *** Prices may be NEGOTIABLE!**

R: Restored (C: Color Touch, S: Slight (e.g. tear seal, cleaned, etc), L: Light, M: Moderate, E: Extensive)

a: Appears,t:Trimmed,d:Double Cover ******Prices subject to change******

SEE COMPLETE CATALOG AT WWW.PCEI

MVL Avengers 1
Original Owner Collection
NM++ 9.6 (3.5) $6,000

MVL Avengers 2
Original Owner Collection
NM+ 9.6 (3.0) $1,250

MVL Avengers 3
Original Owner Collection
NM++ 9.6 (3.5) $975

MVL Avengers 4
Original Owner Collection
NM+ 9.6 (3.5) $3,000

MVL Amazing Spider-Man Ann 1
Original Owner Collection
NM/M 9.9 (3.3) $1,400

MVL Amazing Spider-Man Ann 2
Original Owner Collection
NM/M 9.9 (3.0) $600

MVL Amazing Spider-Man 16
Original Owner Collection
NM++ 9.6 (3.0) $850

MVL Amazing Spider-Man 17
Original Owner Collection
NM+ 9.6 (3.5) $1,150

MVL Amazing Spider-Man 18
Original Owner Collection
NM+ 9.6 (3.5) $740

MVL Amazing Spider-Man 19
Original Owner Collection
NM++ 9.6 (3.5) $750

MVL Amazing Spider-Man 20
Original Owner Collection
NM++ 9.6 (3.5) $900

MVL Amazing Spider-Man 21
Original Owner Collection
NM++ 9.6 (3.5) $825

MVL Amazing Spider-Man 22
Original Owner Collection
NM/M 9.9 (2.0) $575

MVL Amazing Spider-Man 23
Original Owner Collection
NM++ 9.6 (3.5) $850

MVL Amazing Spider-Man 24
Original Owner Collection
NM++ 9.6 (3.5) $500

MVL Amazing Spider-Man 25
Original Owner Collection
NM++ 9.6 (3.5) $600

MVL Amazing Spider-Man 26
Original Owner Collection
NM+ 9.6 (3.5) $540

MVL Amazing Spider-Man 27
Original Owner Collection
NM++ 9.6 (3.5) $625

MVL Amazing Spider-Man 28
Original Owner Collection
NM++ 9.6 (3.5) $1,000

MVL Amazing Spider-Man 29
Original Owner Collection
NM++ 9.6 (3.5) $400

MVL Amazing Spider-Man 30
Original Owner Collection
NM/M 9.9 (3.3) $450

MVL Amazing Spider-Man 39
Original Owner Collection
NM++ 9.6 (3.0) $525

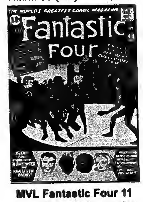
MVL Amazing Spider-Man 40
Original Owner Collection
NM++ 9.6 (3.3) $750

MVL Amazing Spider-Man 50
Original Owner Collection
NM/M 9.9 (2.0) $1,100

TIM Captain America Comics 3
Schomburg-c,Classic Red Skull-c
VF- 7.5 (5.0) $5,000

GKY Doctor Solar
Original Owner Collection
NM+ 9.6 (3.5) $350

MVL Fantastic Four 6
Original Owner Collection
VF+ 8.5 (3.5) $1,100



MVL Fantastic Four 11
Original Owner Collection
NM 9.4 (3.5) $850

MVL Fantastic Four 13
Original Owner Collection
VF/NM 9.0 (3.5) $525

MVL Fantastic Four 20
Original Owner Collection
NM 9.4 (3.5) $350

GKY Green Hornet 1
Original Owner Collection
NM 9.4 (3.5) $225

GKY Green Hornet 2
Original Owner Collection
NM+ 9.6 (3.5) $175

GKY Green Hornet 3
Original Owner Collection
NM 9.4 (3.3) $150

DC Green Lantern 3
Classic German War-c by Nodell
VF+ 8.5 (4.5) $2,800

GKY I Spy 1
Original Owner Collection
NM 9.4 (3.5) $250

GKY I Spy 2
Original Owner Collection
NM+ 9.6 (3.5) $175

GKY I Spy 3
Original Owner Collection
NM+ 9.6 (3.5) $155

GKY I Spy 4
Original Owner Collection
NM+ 9.6 (3.5) $175

GKY I Spy 5
Original Owner Collection
NM 9.4 (3.5) $175

GKY I Spy 6
Original Owner Collection
NM 9.4 (3.5) $150

MVL Silver Surfer 1
Original Owner Collection
NM 9.4 (4.0) $600

MVL Silver Surfer 4
Original Owner Collection
NM/M 9.9 (3.0) $1,000

CALL NOW TO CONSIGN ***TIME PAYMENTS AVAILABLE*** ***CATALOG AT WWW.PCEI***

August 1999

CGSA, PCE, and the PCE logo are Trademarks of the PACIFIC COMIC EXCHANGE, INC.

Copyright © 1999 by PACIFIC COMIC EXCHANGE, INC. All rights reserved.

Strange Adventures Credits

Really enjoyed the ashcan feature by Gary Colabuono. I can fill in a missing credit for him. For Strange Adventures (NN) for July/August 1950, the interior story to version three featuring "Rohh, the Boy Failure," comes from Detective Comics #145 (March 1949). Please let him know since he is seeking credits.

Craig Delich, Kansas

I've been racking my brain trying to nail that one down! Thanks Craig... you've saved Ye Editor from the strange adventure known as the "nervous research breakdown..."

Ashcans, Lamont Larson, & stickers

CBM #71 arrived today and as usual I can barely wait to return home from the post office to see what new and exciting material awaits me in the world of comics. The black and white cover announcing the article "Absolutely Amazing DC Ashcans" was—well, to steal your thunder, absolutely amazing! Over many years of reading a number of publications many of these covers were pictured but never so many, so unusual, as you offered in this one article. For me it will serve as a quick reference check for these rare and marvelous books just as CBM #32 does in the article on the pedigree puzzle.

And that brings me to the article by Jon Berk on the Lamont Larson collection. While I realize some or much of the material was published earlier in 1994, I for one am happy to read it for the first time. It's exactly what we fans like to know about these books and their original buyers. Well done Jon, and thank you CBM staff!

Is there any chance you will reprint Dr. Pat Kochanek's series originally offered in CBM #2-5? And, while I'm at it, how about several CBM Special Editions dealing with the many other articles covered in issues #1-21 inclusive? Many of us missed out on those magazines and we would like to fill in our collections of your wonderful magazine.

One more point. How and where, if you know, may I obtain copies of a set of Gerber's white space stickers without buying your first or second Special Editions? (I have a complete run from #22 on) I have copies of the Photo-Journal Guides and I would love to fill in the blanks.

John G. Schreiber, New Hampshire

Including the Gerber stickers as a premium in CBM Special Edition #2 (also in the upcoming CBM #73, 75, and CBM Special Edition #3) is an admittedly transparent and gimmicky attempt by me to increase circulation on certain CBM issues... while finding an economically viable way to supply collectors with something that I feel is long overdue. The stickers aren't cheap... the little buggers cost darn near as much as the rest of the mag! And it's the oppressive cost that precludes doing them separately from regular production and printing, so unless we get a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, I'll have to keep plugging away at the stickers catch as catch can... four at a time... until the project finishes.

On another note, I was also blown away by Gary Colabuono's DC ashcan article... can you imagine how a long-time DC collector like myself reacted to so many unfamiliar and bizarre combinations? You think you've seen it all, and then an article like that comes in... whew! And Jon Berk's superb research on Lamont Larson (and the original Larson list) was the icing on the cake. I usually don't single out "favorite issues" to praise, but I'm willing to go on record as saying CBM #71 is among my all-time favorites. And didn't Lisa do a stunning job with the unique approach to the cover? Nice job honey!

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE
12 issues for $60
Have CBM mailed right to your front door!
Mail check or MO payable to
Gemstone Publishing,
PO Box 180700, Coronado, CA 92178
MasterCard/Visa orders call
(619) 437-1996
(U.S. FUNDS, MO & MD RESIDENTS ADD SALES TAX)
FOREIGN SUBSCRIPTIONS:
Canada/Mexico $62, Great Britain/
France/Norway/Germany/
Western Europe $110,
Japan/Singapore/Philippines/Australia/
Asian Pacific Rim $120 (All in U.S. Funds)

Wonder Woman strip

Corey Holmes inquires about the "Wonder Woman" comic strip in CBM #71. It started on May 8, 1944 and ended in August, 1945. The daily-only strip was distributed by King Features Syndicate and samples that I have seen are signed by H. G. Peter. Although it looks like his quirky work, it may not have been done by him or else done by him in concert with someone else, which was the situation with a number of comic strips.

As far as reprints go, the sources I have are from two short-lived 1980's publications. "Chapter" #1-4 carried the strip from June 6 to July 17, 1944 and "Comic Strip News" reprinted the November 20, 1944 to March 30, 1945 dailies. Both of these publications are long-since defunct, but Corey Holmes can contact me for copies for his personal use if he is interested.

Carl J. Horak, Alberta, Canada

Another CBMer to the rescue... thanks Carl!

Bill Black writes

I do not get CBM on a regular basis so I don't know if you have gotten any response RE: Australian Planet Comics. It was not an uncommon practice for Australian comics (or American, for that matter) to use art from splash pages of interior stories as covers. If you open that Australian Planet #7 to page 2 of the "Space Rangers" story, you will find the cover art (drawn by Fermo). Australian Planet #6 has a cover from the splash page of that issue's "Space Rangers;" Australian. Planet #15 has the cover to American edition of Man O' Mars.

The Australian editions usually ran 28 pages whereas the American counterparts ran 52. Conceivably the Australians could have created more issues of Planet than there were American

covers for, though I doubt that was the case.

Interior contents of Australian Planets also contained material from other Fiction House titles. Your Planet #7, for example, contained Camilla from Jungle Comics and Senorita Rio from Fight Comics.

Many Fiction House Australian editions (and British editions) also had new covers drawn (usually rather poorly) by artists of the foreign publisher. Examples would be Australian Jumbo #38 and Australian Kaanga #30.

Bill Black, via E-mail

Good to hear from you Bill, it's been awhile! Perhaps (hint hint) you could enlighten us further with an article? Huh? Maybe? Thanks for writing, it was good to hear from you... and thanks for setting us straight on the Aussie books!

The Original Comic Book Memorabilia Insurance Policy

Marketed by

Cornell & Finkelmeier, Inc.

The nation's largest insurer of sports memorabilia, is proud to announce the introduction of their new insurance program specifically designed for comic book collectors and dealers including store package coverages if needed.

Phone: (800) 739-3314

PO Box 210, Wapakoneta, OH 45895

E-mail: comics@cf-insurance.com
Visit our web site at www.cf-insurance.com

TravelersPropertyCasualty
A Member of TravelersGroup

Dark Side of the Con

I thought you might be interested in a few anecdotes about the San Diego ComicCon from the old days

It wasn't easy to find a home for our darling innocents, our nerdy, bookish folk who loved comics. I had a real fight with some of the hotels that did not take us seriously at all. But that was in 1970. Today, in 1999, we rent the largest amount of rooms of any convention all year long.

But who knew? Not me. I was just organizing the San Diego Con as an extension of what I did in Detroit in 1964. There, we called it "The Detroit Triple Fan Fair" and it was a joy to put it on. I still write to friends back in Detroit who were a part of it all. So when I moved here to San Diego in 1969, I did a new version of it here.

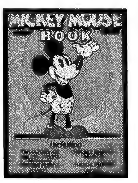
When I retired from it in 1984 I'd reached "burn-out." I'd been in comic fandom for 40 years by then. It was time. Luck would have it that a good group of true believers kept it going and built it to the "Mega-Con" it is today. It does a lot of good for so many people. But through the years I realized that like everything in life, it had a dark side.

For instance, host hotels originally focused on things one might not expect of a Comic Book gathering. Before the San Diego ComicCon moved to the Convention Center we had it at downtown hotels. I remember one of the hotel people asking me, "How big a bar bill can we expect?" I replied, "Hey, these are kids who read comic books, not a bunch of drunkards." That ended the session, of course.

But unknown to many, we had to hire an all-night security staff early on because our darling "innocents" did some interesting things from time to time. One enterprising chap broke the lock on the hotel liquor storeroom and made off with several bottles of booze during the A.M. hours. Another propped the elevator doors open and rolled a grand piano down the shaft. One threw a heavy sand urn out of a window onto the lower roof and knocked out the air-conditioning for one side of the hotel (on one of the hottest weekends that summer). One kid put on a Superman cape and jumped from one hotel balcony to another (ten-story drop). Two dealers were robbed in their room of thousands of dollars.

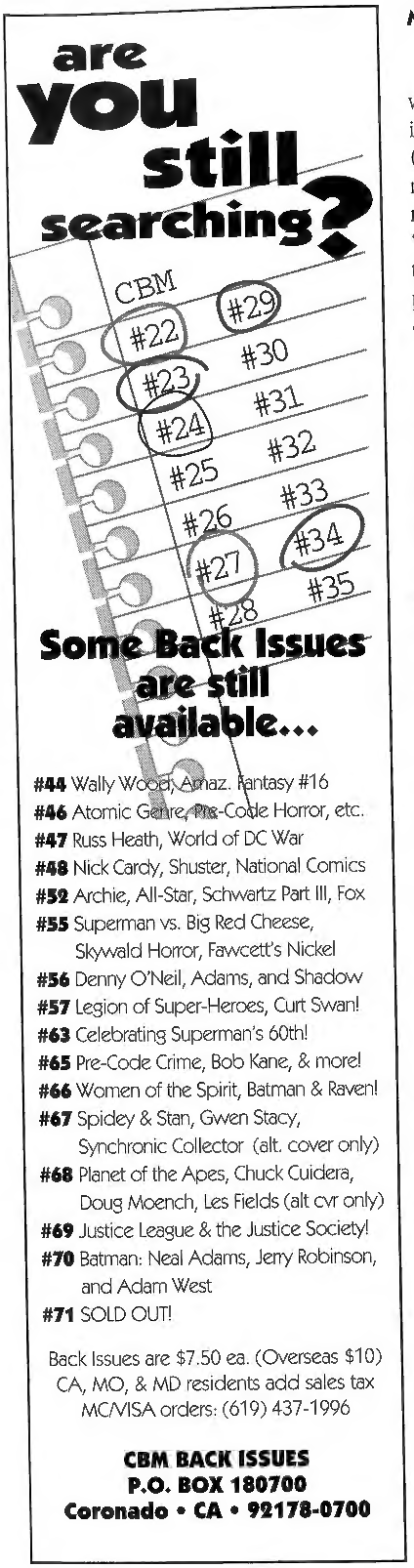
One enterprising actress rented a dealer's table to sell a frontal nude poster of herself. Nearly porno paintings appeared in the Art Show. X-Rated

ALLSTAR AUCTIONS
allstarauc.com



You have heard about the record prices realized at our past comic collectibles sales.
We are currently accepting pedigree and key comics, original comic covers, comic art and strip art.
Next event scheduled for November 1999

For further information, contact: Nadia Mannarino at ★ Phone (201)652-1305 ★ Fax (201)445-3371
E-Mail ★ AllStarAuc@aol.com ★ Visit our web site at ★ allstarauc.com



Some Back Issues are still available...

#44 Wally Wood, Amaz. Fantasy #16
#46 Atomic Genre, Pre-Code Horror, etc.
#47 Russ Heath, World of DC War
#48 Nick Cardy, Shuster, National Comics
#52 Archie, All-Star, Schwartz Part III, Fox
#55 Superman vs. Big Red Cheese, Skywald Horror, Fawcett's Nickel
#56 Denny O'Neil, Adams, and Shadow
#57 Legion of Super-Heroes, Curt Swan!
#63 Celebrating Superman's 60th!
#65 Pre-Code Crime, Bob Kane, & more!
#66 Women of the Spirit, Batman & Raven!
#67 Spidey & Stan, Gwen Stacy, Synchronic Collector (alt. cover only)
#68 Planet of the Apes, Chuck Cuidera, Doug Moench, Les Fields (alt cvr only)
#69 Justice League & the Justice Society!
#70 Batman: Neal Adams, Jerry Robinson, and Adam West
#71 SOLD OUT!

Back Issues are $7.50 ea. (Overseas $10)
CA, MO, & MD residents add sales tax
MC/VISA orders: (619) 437-1996

CBM BACK ISSUES
P.O. BOX 180700
Coronado • CA • 92178-0700

videos began to show up as well as "adult" material. Gays demanded their own panel and dance. (Why not?) Dealers were caught stealing from a neighbor who was late to get to his table in the morning. T and A books began to appear. "Working girls" were known to be around plying their services. At 3 A.M. a kid was spotted spray-painting the expensive wallpaper on the suite level of the hotel. (He was caught and went to jail.)

As a matter of fact, when ever a dealer caught a thief, security took him to a little office, several dealers came and identified their thousand dollar books and the thief went off to jail. All of this was done very discreetly, of course... but the headaches and problems were a bigger and bigger part of the Con.

Stolen original art would appear on a table of some innocent dealer who'd bought it not knowing it was stolen. Old enemies ran into each other and fights broke out. Counterfeit goods were confiscated. But compared to all that, the good stuff far exceeded the bad.

Along that line, some really extraordinary people became a part of the "Con." In 1973, we hastily set up the dealers room at the Sheraton Airport Inn on Harbor Island. Two dealers came to me with major complaints about the way the sellers tables were arranged. One of the guys was Irving Bigman. The other dealer was Tom French. Tom, a draftsman who designed air conditioning systems for new homes. Layout was one of his skills.

To their criticism I replied, "Listen, you guys, if you can find a better layout, go do it, but I have to open the doors to the public in 15 minutes!" So they quickly moved tables around and it was better. After the Con I told Tom French how much he improved the dealers room and since he was a local guy, I asked if he would like to be in charge of the dealers room. All it would involve was for him to attend a few meetings a year. He said, "OK." Little did either of us know it would lead to a 25-year commitment for he and his wife Virginia.

As we grew, Tom's skills... his easy way with people and his problem solving talents... would make him the most valued committee member the Con ever had. I say that with no hesitation. Tom and Virginia had friends all over the world due to their loving care with the dealers room and the "huxters" who populated it. He took our expansion in his stride. Nothing was too much of a challenge for Tom.

On the whole, the "dark side" has gotten weaker and weaker through the years. Overall, so much positive has happened, that all the negatives are forgotten.

I started the whole thing to honor those guys (and gals) who sit long hours at the drawing board all alone fighting deadlines... so once a year they can come out to meet their audience. The old-timers we honor were never treated this kindly in "the good ol' days." They've got some REAL horror stories to tell. But we give them their "last hurrahs" and money for original sketches. And maybe it all comes out in the end. I'd like to think so!

Shel Dorf, California

Don't tar and feather us!

I've never understood the whole ballyhoo about split grades (David Grisez's letter in CBM #71). They only exist because the current grades are so vast. Should a Good/15 sell for the same as a Good/34?

My repeat customers are the ones who know that a GD/VG from me is much better than a GD book would be, and a VG- would be just a little bit better, but not quite VG material. They realize that there is value in the split grade distinctions, and are willing to pay a little more for a better book.

It's just a way to more accurately describe a comic. Who cares if the designation is VG/54 or VG/FN? IT'S THE SAME THING!

If you don't like split grades, by all means don't use them. But don't tar and feather us who do. We're just trying to provide our customers with good value for their money, the same that you are.

Mike ?, via E-mail

Great Hera!

All right, you've done theme issues on Superman and Batman. The next obvious choice is Wonder Woman, the third part of the Big Three! I would especially enjoy emphasis on Andru's and Esposito's Silver Age contribution to the comic book legend. Their cartoony style was the essence of DC comics at that time. Would also like to see some covers pictured... Gerber stopped showing them after #100, Great Hera!

Tom Stein, Connecticut

Good News Tom... your request is in the works right now!

Imagine my surprise

Finally got around to reading CBM #69, the JSA issue. Being about my favorite supergroup, this issue just had to be great, and so it was. However, there were a few errors, which I point out only to set the record straight for future researchers: You very kindly credited my abortive All-Star Index as the source of some of your JSA membership data, for which, my thanks. However, quite a bit of the data was awry, and you didn't get that part from me.

Dr. Fate first appeared in More Fun #55, not All-American #25. Dr. Mid-Nite first appeared in All-American #25, not in Sensation #1. And imagine my surprise at learning that Wildcat was secretly broadcasting mogul Ted Turner! I always thought he was boxing champ Ted Grant. (Too bad he wasn't named Lou Grant; then both MTM alumni Lou Grant (aka Ed Asner) and Ted Knight would have been JSA members.)

Somebody really likes the name Turner, I guess, because it pops up again in Mike Wilbur's list of the JSA members' Silver Age appearances, this time as the surname of Johnny Thunder! Oh, and Vandal Savage was a Green Lantern villain, not a Hawkman villain.

Other than these few minor gaffs, this was the most comprehensive JSA article yet published, at least in terms of the stories and characters. As Jack Curtin noted, he left the subject of the All-Star artists for another article.

Re: the Jon McClure article on DC Giants, I have only a single correction: 80-Page Giants #8 (More Secrets origin) did NOT reprint Robin's origin from Detective #38; instead, it reprinted the much later story from Batman #129 which contained a flashback to his origin. All for now.

Murray R. Ward, Manitoba, Canada

Getting better all the time

Please include a more balanced coverage of Golden Age comics! CBM is still too biased towards post-WWII Silver Age and now Bronze Age! There is still relatively too little coverage of the cornerstone of our hobby—that is 1938-1945 era! There is tons of reference material available including Steranko's History, Bails' Who's Who… countless fanzine articles and indexes from the '60s etc. Why after 69 issues do we get still so relatively few in-depth writings about the Golden Age although recently it's getting better (#69 is fine)?

For an example of fine writing check out the original comics zine from the '60s and '70s, Comic World, by Bob Jennings. Each issue had well-referenced, interesting, articulately written articles along with the element of fun dripping through each one!

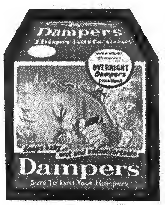
Now for the positive comments: the balance of articles on Comics vs. Investment news and views is perfectly balanced! And the production values also are perfect. And I wish I had CBM to read weekly or bi-weekly. I can't stand waiting so long for each issue (especially since I dropped the Comic Buyers Guide a few years ago).

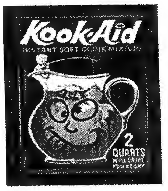
Suggestion: How about a "Traders' Page" just for people trading comics—that's one way to satisfy those readers who wrote in complaining about too much attention being paid to "capitalistic wages." (And in an age especially when it seems everything is up for sale. What next—bottled air?!) *(Continued on page 76)*

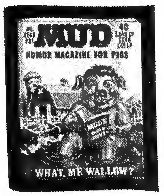
Christmas is coming early this year!

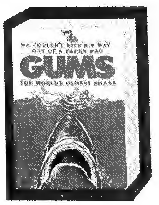
In honor of our upcoming 75th issue anniversary, our fearless leader and publisher, Steve Geppi, is celebrating by offering collectors full page b/w ads in CBM #75 for only $150 (if you predominantly list comic books for sale, prepay the ad, and send it camera-ready or on disk!). That's right (gulp), a $400 ad (choke) for only a hundred and fifty bucks (gasp)! This unbelievable offer is a one-issue, one-time deal… first come, first served! But please remember, there are only so many pages in an issue… so be smart, reserve your space now!

CBM Advertising (619) 437-1996









Wacky Packages Original Art

WANTED

If you have any original 5x7 paintings to Wacky Packages (even if they are not for sale) please contact me so I can leave you with an offer (and stop looking for it).Cash paid or will trade. Please note: I am not looking for the individual stickers.The following is a partial wish list. Please contact: Eric Roberts 260 Atherton Avenue, Atherton, CA. 94027 Telephone (650) 327-6570 Email: plastered_peanuts@yahoo.com

1st Series
Duzn't Detergent
Vicejoy Cigarettes
Camals Cigarettes
Campy Soup
Grave Train
Cracked Jerk
Crust
Kook-Aid
Skimpy
Schmutz Beer
Quacker Oats
Cracked Animals
Coronation Milk
Fink

2nd Series
Gurgle Baby Food
Cap'n Crud
Fish Bone
Hurts Tomatoes
Dull Pineapple
Brittle Soap Pads
Run Tony Shells

3rd Series
Snatch a Pak
Hawaiian Punks
Hungry Jerk
Drowny Softner
Sweat Hard soap

4th Series
Milk Foam
Gatoraid
Mess Clairol
Land O Quakes
Grazin Bran
Freetoes

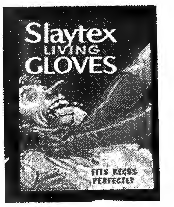
5th Series
Head & Boulders
Shot Wheels
Knuckles
Sicken of the Sea
Slaytex
Triks Ceral

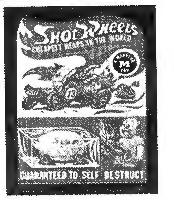
6th Series
Play Dumb
Super Cigar Crisp
Bar-Kist

7th Series
Mr. Goodbye
Oh Hairy Bar
Blast Blew Ribbon

8th Series
Canadian Clod
Paid Killers
Bone Ami
Burpsi Cola
Ivery Snow

9th - 16th Series
Killy Putty
Mountain Goo
Mud
Progreaso Sauce
Alpain Cereal
Barman
Milk Muds
Brandy Land
Creep
Crocked
Drainola
Fanatical
Ain't
Playbug
Slayer Asprin
Hippy Trash Bag
Shingle's Plaster Chips
Gums
Bawl Park Franks





Uncanny Comics!

By Pat S. Calhoun

The company we know as Marvel published pulp magazines in the 1930s as Red Circle. It's recognized that over a year before *Marvel Comics* #1 in late 1939, Red Circle issued the pulp *Marvel Science Stories,* but it's seldom mentioned that earlier in 1938 Red Circle had started another fantasy mag, *Uncanny Tales.* So it should come as no surprise that when Atlas launched their fifth fantasy comic title of 1952 they christened it *Uncanny Tales.* And, like the earlier borrowing of the "Marvel" pulp logo, the distinctive "wavy" lettering style from the mag was retained in the comic's banner.

Uncanny Tales #1 (June 1952) is packed with four enjoyable tales and an eerie cover by Sol Brodsky. Russ Heath vividly illustrates the yarn inside, 'While the City Sleeps," a thoroughly enjoyable "flying saucers and in a graveyard where aliens re animate corpses' romp. The second story is a chiller about two old ladies who breed and keep pet rats—with distinctive art by Manny Stallman.

"The Drop of Blood," powerfully drawn by Dick Ayers, is potent and prophetic: a hypnotist's assistant in a carnival show kills his master to regain his own will, but a splash of the victim's blood won't wash off his shoulder. He seeks the aid of the carnival mystic, who peddles a potion that both cures ills and removes stains, but the results are fabulously fatal.

Satan and Sammy Snodgrass" is a clever deal with the devil six-pager scripted by Stan Lee (editor of the Atlas line) and rendered by Paul Reinman. All four stories in the book are worthwhile, and that happens seldom enough to mark this as an auspicious first issue.

Uncanny Tales #7 (April 1953) features a wonderful Bill Everett cover, and the story inside—with art by the able Harry Anderson—is creepy enough: another carnival weirdie, where one clown murders a rival clown and then tries to impersonate his victim but finds that murder is no laughing matter.

"The Witch of Landor" is a fast-moving four pager with emphatic imagery by Larry Woromay about a man who finds out how stolen magic always turns on the thief. "The Woman Who Talked Too Much" is the inevitably ironic tale of a man's ill-fated attempt to escape his windbag wife; it's a readable filler. "Planet of Death" is a three-pager of little consequence, but Howie Post's unique drawing style makes it a visual treat.

The last story is a marvelous one, by the terrific team of Stan Lee and Joe Maneely: "I Was Trapped in a Haunted House." When a new kid in town scoff's at the gang's addiction to Atlas fantasy comics they dare him to spend the hour after midnight in the local haunted house. The shot of a newsstand on page two—festooned with Atlas books—is a big thrill, and things move adroitly towards the charming conclusion where the newcomer learns the value of spooky stories. Every panel of this masterpiece shines with the intensity of Maneely's art.

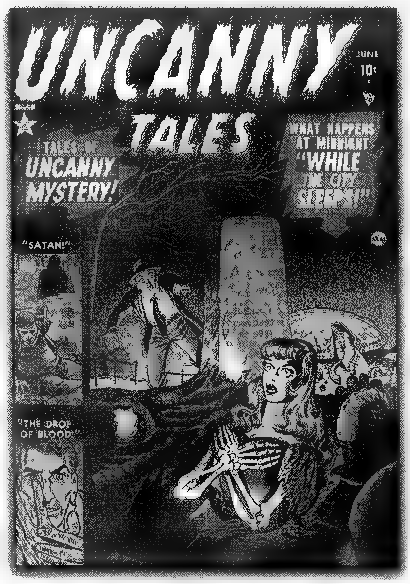
Uncanny Tales #20 (May 1954) offers a high-impact cover by Robert Q. Sale, his only Atlas fantasy cover, although he drew many memorable interior yarns. The inside opener is "Somewhere Lurks a Thing" with crude but creative graphics by Dick Briefer, famous for his long tenure on Frankenstein for Prize Comics. It's an excellent tale of a trans-dimensional vampire and the hapless human hosts he must possess to gain full entry into our world so he can feed.

Next up is one of the anti-Commie yarns Atlas churned out in a mixture of zeal and desperation: a story of brainwashing gone awry in Korea. Then comes "Who Shall Judge," with lavishly detailed drawing by Jack Katz, an ironic fable of a bribe taking judge and the steps he takes when the police catch on to him.

"Proof Positive" is an SF quickie about a man who discovers a duplicate Earth and a cosmic calamity; its perfunctory nature makes it four-color fodder. "Ted's Head" wraps things up with an exciting story of a historian who has nightmares about the French Revolution and the terrors of the guillotine. But the people he dreams about really do lose their heads! Oh, Atlas made decapitation fun! And that gleeful grimness would soon vanish forever as companies toned down their products to accommodate the coming censorship.

But the pre-Code thrills were still there in *Uncanny Tales* #20, enough to make it a memorable issue. *Uncanny Tales* continued past the establishment of the Comics Code Authority in late 1954; Atlas actually expanded their fantasy line in 1955 and 1956. However, the Code had taken the heart out of four-color fantasy. Hence the title's representation here with one issue from each of the three great years of 1952, 1953, and 1954.

In 1957 Atlas suffered a major setback as an attempt at a new distribution deal turned into a



The over-the-top combination of horror and science fiction elements in the "aliens in the graveyard" cover on Uncanny Tales #1 (Jun 1952) exemplifies pre-Code Atlas fantasy.

disaster. *Uncanny Tales*, like most of the other Atlas titles, fell victim to this "implosion," and the last issue was #56, dated September 1957. Of course Atlas metamorphosed into Marvel, perhaps wisely deciding not to call the revamped line *Uncanny Comics*. Nonetheless, the achievement of *Uncanny Tales* and Atlas fantasy during the pre-Code years will endure, with collectors prizing these books that never fail to spark their sense of wonder.

Pat Calhoun is a nationally recognized comic book historian. Originally a Coronadan, Pat and his family now reside in Santa Rosa.

Bill Everett drew many fine covers for the Atlas fantasy books; but his cover for Uncanny Tales #7 (Apr 1954) is his supreme masterpiece!

Robert Q. Sale illustrated a handful of Atlas fantasy stories in an emphatic hyperbolic style that can be seen in all its lurid glory on Uncanny Tales #20 (May 1954)... his only cover for the genre.

COMIC BOOKS WANTED!

WE HAVE PURCHASED MORE INDIVIDUAL COMIC BOOKS
AND MORE QUALITY COLLECTIONS
THAN ANY OTHER DEALER IN AMERICA!

METROPOLIS

AMERICA'S #1 COMIC DEALER!

873 BROADWAY SUITE 201
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10003
PH: 212-260-4147 FAX 212-260-4304 TOLL FREE: 800 229-6387

Love & War

Please add $5 00 for shipping.Orders over $100 ship free.Personal checks,money orders,Visa,MasterCard and American Express accepted
We are always looking to buy collections and quality books.

Boy Meets Girl	1	Fine+		$50.00
Boy Meets Girl	2	VF-		$35.00
Boy Meets Girl	3	Fine		$20.00
Boy Meets Girl	4	VF		$40 00
Boy Meets Girl	5	FVF		$30 00
Boy Meets Girl	6	VF-		$35.00
Boy Meets Girl	7	VF/VF+		$40.00
Boy Meets Girl	9	VF-		$30.00
Boy Meets Girl	19	Fine+		$16.00
Boy Meets Girl	21	Good+		$5.00
Boy Meets Girl	22	Good+		$5.00
Confessions of Love	12	VF-		$75.00
Confessions of Love	13	VF+	Mile High	$300 00
Confessions of Romance	9	VG-		$30.00
Confessions of Romance	14	Fine		$50.00
Falling in Love	33	VF		$65.00
Forbidden Love	2	VF/NM	High Sierra	$375.00
Girls' Love Stories	43	VG-		$5.00
Girls' Love Stories	69	NM-		$80.00
Girls' Love Stories	92	VF/NM	Sparta File copy	$45.00
Girls' Love Stories	93	NM-	Sparta File copy	$50.00
Girls' Romances	66	NM-		$60.00
Heart Throbs	64	VF/NM		$75.00
Lovers' Lane	1	FVF		$50.00
Lovers' Lane	3	VG/F		$15.00
Lovers' Lane	5	VG+		$12.00
Lovers' Lane	6	FVF		$21.00
Lovers' Lane	8	FVF		$21.00
Lovers' Lane	9	FVF		$21.00
Lovers' Lane	10	Fine		$14.00
Lovers' Lane	20	VG+		$6.00
Lovers' Lane	21	Fine-		$8.00
Lovers' Lane	22	VG		$6.00
Popular Teen-Agers,Love	14	Fine		$70.00
Popular Teen-Agers,Love	23	VG/F		$35.00
Popular Teen-Agers,Romances	9	Fine	$60.00	
Secret Hearts	59	Fine+		$35.00
Secret Hearts	62	VF		$150.00
Target Western Romances		106 (#1)	VF/NM	$300.00
Top Love Stories	10	Fine/Fine+		$50.00
Top Love Stories	12	Fine-		$45.00
Top Love Stories	3 (#1)	Fine+	Mile High	$295.00
True-To-Life Romances	6	VG-		$30.00
True-To-Life Romances	9	VF/NM		$175.00
True-To-Life Romances	14	VG/F		$50.00
True-To-Life Romances	15	VG-		$35.00
Air Fighters Comics	4	VF++	River City	$750.00
Air Fighters Comics	12	VF/NM		$525.00
All American Men of War	11	VF	River City	$200.00
All American Men of War	43	VF+	River City	$125.00
All American Men of War	81	VF		$50.00
All American Men of War	108	NM-	Mass.	$45.00
All American Men of War	115	VF/NM	Mass.	$40.00
All American Men of War	116	VF/NM	Mass.	$40.00
American Air Forces	5	FVF	River City	$25.00
Combat Casey	32	VG	River City	$10.00
Dusty Ayres	1/35	VG+		$180.00
G.I. Combat	52	VF		$100.00
G.I. Combat	54	VF-	Salida	$100.00
G.I. Combat	70	VF-		$65.00
G.I. Combat	77	VF/NM		$150.00
G.I. Combat	78	VG+		$35.00
G.I. Combat	79	VG		$30.00
G.I Combat	81	VF/NM		$50.00
G.I Combat	84	VG/F		$35.00
G.I. Combat	87	Fine		$500.00
G I. Combat	88	VF		$250.00
G.I. Combat	89	VG/F		$35.00
G.I. Combat	90	Fine-		$45 00
G.I. Combat	92	VF-/VF		$100.00
G.I. Combat	93	VF-/VF		$100.00
G.I. Combat	94	VF/NM		$150.00
G.I. Combat	95	FVF		$75.00
G.I. Combat	96	VF		$125.00
G.I. Combat	97	VF+		$135.00
G.I. Combat	99	VF		$125.00
G.I. Combat	88	VF		$250.00
G.I. Combat	89	VG/F		$35.00
G.I. Combat	90	Fine-		$45.00
G.I. Combat	92	VF-/VF		$100.00
G.I. Combat	93	VF-/VF		$100.00
G.I. Combat	94	VF/NM		$150.00
G.I. Combat	95	FVF		$75.00
G.I. Combat	96	VF		$125.00
G.I. Combat	97	VF+		$135.00
G.I. Combat	99	VF		$125.00
G.I. Combat	100	VF++		$125.00
G I. Combat	101	VF+		$100.00
G.I. Combat	102	VF+		$100.00
G.I. Combat	103	VF-		$70.00
G.I. Combat	104	VF-/VF		$75.00
G.I. Combat	106	VF+		$50 00
G.I. Combat	107	VF		$40.00
G.I. Combat	109	VF/NM		$125.00
G.I Combat	113	NM-	Mass.	$125.00
G.I. Combat	117	VF+	Mass.	$60.00
G.I. Combat	118	VF	Oakland	$50.00
G.I. Combat	119	VF+	Oakland	$125.00
G.I. Combat	121	VF		$25.00
G.I. Combat	122	VF/NM		$35.00
G.I. Combat	123	VF+	Oakland	$50.00
G.I. Combat	129	VF		$25.00
G.I. Combat	134	NM	Oakland	$60.00
Heroic Comics	23	VF-		$50.00
Our Army at War	6	FVF	River City	$150.00
Our Army at War	45	VF	River City	$95.00
Our Army at War	57	Fine		$60 00
Our Army at War	124	VF		$60.00
Our Army at War	126	FVF		$30.00
Our Army at War	146	VF+		$35.00
Our Army at War	148	VF/NM	Mass.	$75.00
Our Army at War	150	VF+	Mass.	$60.00
Our Army at War	152	VF/NM	Mass.	$75.00
Our Army at War	159	VF/NM	Green River	$75.00
Our Fighting Forces	1	GVG		$105.00
Our Fighting Forces	18	VF	River City	$110.00
Our Fighting Forces	19	VF-	River City	$95.00
Our Fighting Forces	20	Fine+		$75.00
Our Fighting Forces	29	VF+		$125.00
Our Fighting Forces	70	VF		$20.00
Our Fighting Forces	94	VF/NM		$35 00
Sgt. Fury	1	Good		$88.00
Star Spangled War Stories	45	VG		$50.00
Star Spangled War Stories	50	VF+	River City	$125.00
Star Spangled War Stories	52	VF+	River City	$125.00
Star Spangled War Stories	99	VF		$100.00
Star Spangled War Stories	102	VF+		$100.00
Star Spangled War Stories	105	VF+		$100.00
Star Spangled War Stories	106	VF+		$100.00
Star Spangled War Stories	124	VF/NM		$100.00
Star Spangled War Stories	125	VF+		$85.00
Star Spangled War Stories	127	VF+		$85.00
Star Spangled War Stories	128	VF/NM		$100.00
Star Spangled War Stories	129	NM-		$110.00
Star Spangled War Stories	131	VF		$65.00
Star Spangled War Stories	135	NM		$120.00
Star Spangled War Stories	136	VF+		$80.00
Unknown Soldier,The	247	VF		$4.00
War Comics	4	VF-	River City	$50.00
Weird War Tales	18	Fine+		$5.00
Weird War Tales	38	FVF		$3.00
Weird War Tales	56	VF-		$4.00

jaster•collectibles

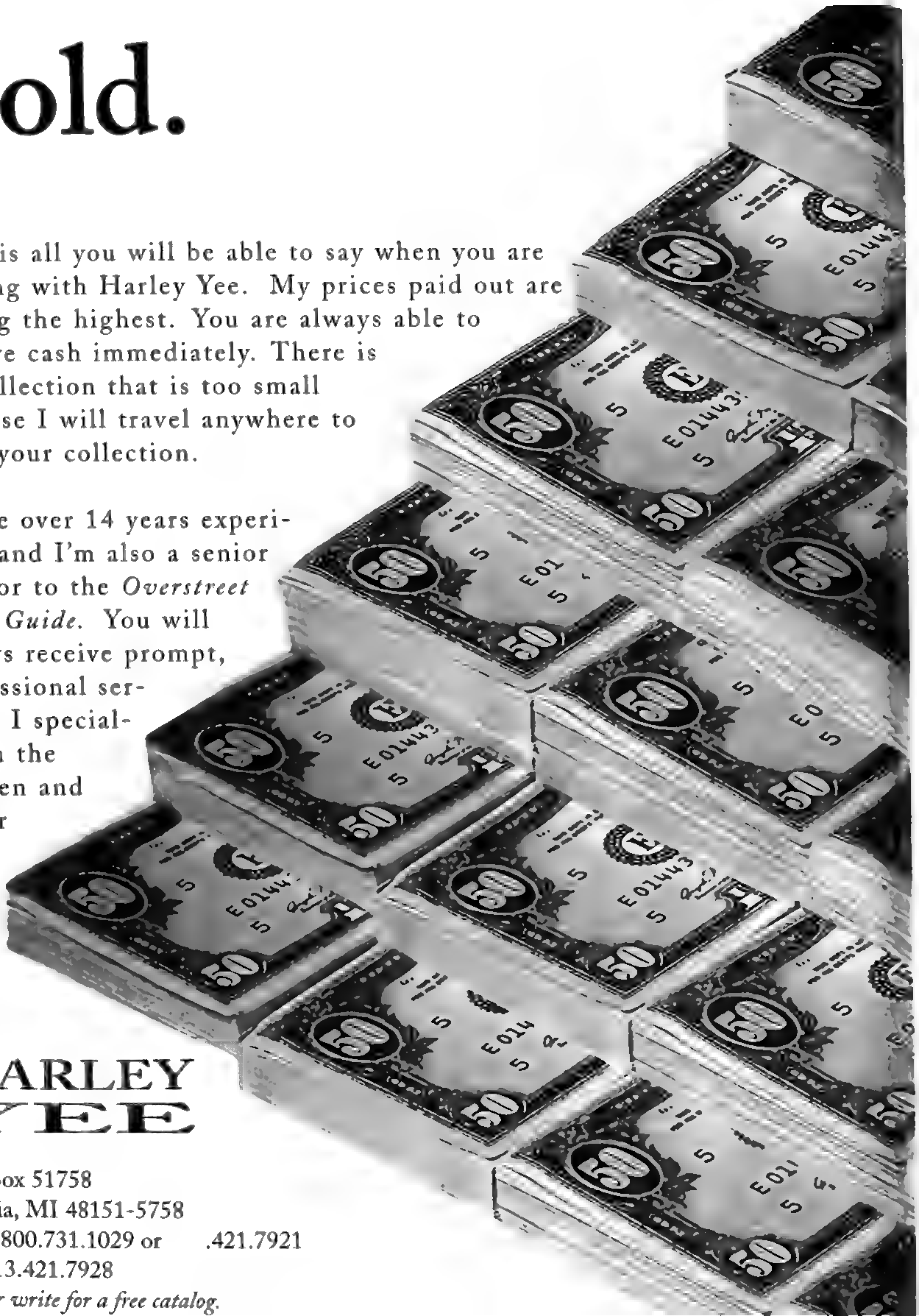
314 W. Superior St • Chicago • Il.• 60610
312 • 944 • 4200 • email:comics@ais.net

Visit our new website:www.nearmint.com

Sold.

That is all you will be able to say when you are dealing with Harley Yee. My prices paid out are among the highest. You are always able to receive cash immediately. There is no collection that is too small because I will travel anywhere to view your collection.

I have over 14 years experience and I'm also a senior advisor to the *Overstreet Price Guide*. You will always receive prompt, professional service. I specialize in the Golden and Silver Age.



HARLEY YEE

P.O. Box 51758
Livonia, MI 48151-5758
voice: 800.731.1029 or .421.7921
fax: 313.421.7928
Call or write for a free catalog.

More Foxy Ladies?

By Michelle Nolan

Michelle again asks CBM readers... "Do they exist?"

So you think there aren't any more old newsstand comic books to be discovered? Think again!

I was casually looking through a stack of comics that Jim Vadeboncoeur, Jr. recently bought -it's a tradition of many years, since he finds so much neat old stuff and he loves to share knowledge— when I was stunned by a comic I had never known existed.

I knew that *My Secret Life* #27 from Fox exists with a July 1950 cover date, but the one I held in my hot little hands is dated September 1951 and it is also a #27.

Bingo! It turns out to be the ninth known title in a series of mysterious "last-gasp" 1951 one-shot issues from Fox! So all of you collectors of Fox sleaze—which are among the most sought-after Atom Age titles these days—have yet another collecting challenge before you.

Furthermore, if you'll read a little further, you'll also learn about a dozen Fox issues listed in the *Overstreet Price Guide* that almost certainly do not exist!

I have seen all of the Fox romance comics, so here are the titles of the stories in this second #27 issue of *My Secret Life*. Are they reprints? Can anyone help with a copy of the splash page if you find any of these titles in earlier Fox issues? The stories are "Glamour Turned My Head" (9 pages), "He Tried to Possess Me" (10 pages) and "I was Branded" (10 pages).

This is my third column on 1940's and 1950's comics that may or may not exist (the first two were in *CBM* #33 and #45), prepared in consultation with Southern Californian indexer and romance collector-supreme, Dan Stevenson.

There are no known Fox comics with dates beyond September 1950 except for those nine "last gasp" issues. The following seven of these Fox finales were taken from titles discontinued in either August or September 1950. *Crime Incorporated* #3, *Crimes By Women* #15, *Famous Crimes* #20, and *Murder Incorporated* #3 (all dated August 1951)... and *March of Crime* #3, *My Love Life* #13 and *My Secret Life* #27 (all dated September 1951).

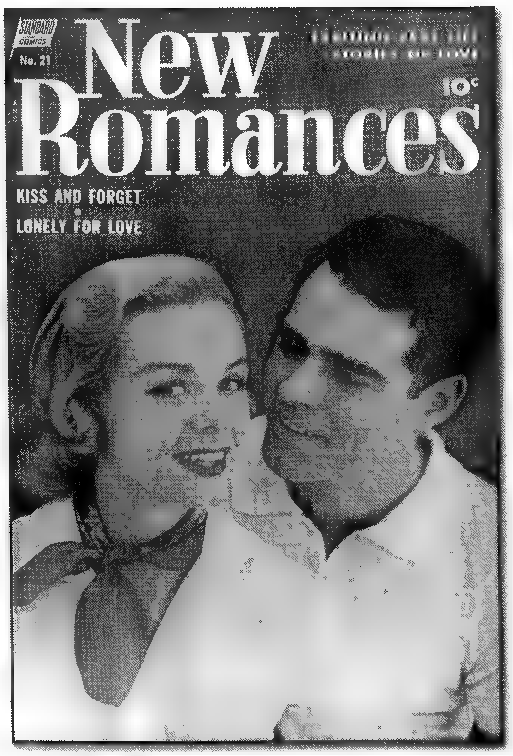
The other two 1951 Foxes were *Rocket Ship X* dated September and the undated *General Douglas MacArthur Life Story*.

The recently discovered second issue of *My Secret Life* #27 seems to be the strangest number with regard to dates, since the numbering of the other "last gasp" Fox issues came directly from the previous issue in 1950, with one exception. There was a *My Love Life* #13 in 1950 (dated August) but the second *My Love Life* #13 apparently continued from *My Story* #12 (August 1950).

On the other hand, the original series of *My Secret Life* included issues #26 (May 1950) and #27 (July 1950), even though the series also became the teen humor title *Romeo Tubbs* with #26 (May 1950) and continuing with #28 (July 1950) while skipping #27 under the *Romeo Tubbs* banner. (Whew!) The issue of #28, which is not shown in the *Gerber Photo Journal*, is shown here, maybe for the first time anywhere. (One of my wacky personal collecting goals is to have at least one issue of every teen humor title.)

Publisher Victor Fox was notorious for keeping the numbering system of old titles in order to avoid obtaining new postal permits, just as several other publishers did. Sometimes the Post Office caught on and sometimes it didn't. At any rate, the confusion regarding *My Secret Life* and *Romeo Tubbs* is apparently why there is no reg-

The existence of New Romances #21 (May 1954), the rare last issue from Standard Comics, had been in doubt... until comic researcher and indexer Dan Stevenson recently discovered a copy.



Teen-Age Diary Secrets #7 (Nov 1949) is the rarest first digest issue from St. John, & contains 5 Matt Baker stories.

ular issue of *Romeo Tubbs* #27

That in itself is another mystery, since *Romeo Tubbs* #1 is listed in the *Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide* but there is no known copy of #1. Does anyone out there know of a *Romeo Tubbs* #1?

Complicating the mystery, a *Romeo Tubbs* #27 is also listed in the *Price Guide*, dated November 1952 with a *Romeo Tubbs* #27 cover slapped on an issue of *Pedro*, which was another Fox humor title (and one of the most racist comics of all time). I have no idea what that is, unless someone got hold of some left-

Listed in the Guide but do not exist!

Here are the more than 135 non-existent comics from the 1940s and 1950s that are still listed in the Guide (some with the notation of "Exist?"). However, there is no evidence that they exist. Can anyone prove otherwise?

Alice #2 (Ziff-Davis). The second issue exists with #11 on the cover and #2 in the indicia, but a third issue does not exist. The second issue should most properly be called #11, since the first issue is #10.

All-True Detective Cases #1 (Avon). The real #1 is a reprint annual and the regular series begins with #2.

Animal Crackers #3-10 (Fox). #1 and 2 may exist, but #3-10 surely do not.

Atom-Age Combat #1 (Fago). #1 is St. John from 2/58; Fago's two-issue series began with #2.

Badge of Justice #23 and #1 (Charlton). The correct numbering is #22 followed by #2-4.

Barney Baxter #4-5 (Dell).

Beanie the Meanie #1-2 (Fago). The only issue is #3.

Billy the Kid Adv. Magazine #30 (Toby).

Blazing West #21-22 (ACG). These are really Hooded Horsemen #21-22 (first series).

Blondie, Dagwood and Daisy (Harvey giant). This is probably a foreign-published issue.

Captain Battle #4 (Gleason). #3 and 5 exist of a second series.

Champ Comics #26-29 (Harvey). The series ends with #25.

Cody of the Pony Express #2-3 (Fox).

Crime and Justice #22 (Charlton). This changes to Badge of Justice with issue #22.

Dark Mysteries #25 (Story Publishing).

Dime Comics #5 (no publisher). This could be a Canadian title.

Exciting Romances #13-14 (Fawcett). The last issue was #12 (Jan 1953).

Family Funnies (Harvey) This is a black and white issue.

Farrell/Four Star 1947 one-shots: Dandee, Korner Kid, Jolly, Merry, Tops and Top Flight. None of these exist as Four Star titles except in house ads.

Feature Stories Magazine #4 (Fox).

Flyboy #3-4 (Ziff-Davis). #1-2 exist, and later an Approved Comics #5 appeared.

Foodini #5 (Continental).

Foreign Intrigues #13 (Charlton).

Fritzi Ritz #2 (United Features). The unnumbered first issue was marked "Special Fall Issue;" the series began with #3.

Funny Picture Stories #8-9 (Centaur).

Guns Against Gangsters Vol. 2 #2 (#8) (Curtis). Became True-to-Life Romances #8.

Hand of Fate #26 (Ace).

Hawk #5-7 (St. John).

Hooded Horseman #23-27 (ACG, second series). This 12-issue title ran #21-27 (first series) and #18-22 (second series).

Iron Vic #2-3 (St. John).

Jackie Gleason #1-2 (1948, St. John). The only pre-DC Comics series was #1-4 in 1955 from St. John.

Jim Bowie #15 (Charlton).

Jungle Jo #4-6 (Fox).

Kid Cowboy #12 (St. John).

Liberty Comics #4 (Green).

Lil' Ghost #1 (Fago). #1 is St. John; #2-3 are Fago.

Lil' Genius #1-4 (Charlton). Issue #6 on definitely exists; #5 may exist.

Little Giant Detective Funnies #2-3 (Centaur).

Love Stories #6-12 (Fox). These have often been confused with Star's Top Love Stories.

Manhunt #12 (Magazine Enterprises).

Men In Action #7-9 (Ajax). This has been confused with the Atlas title.

Never Again #2 (Charlton).

Nutty Comics #2-3 (Harvey). The series actually began with #4.

Paul Terry's Heckle and Jeckle #1-2. The first two issues were actually Blue Ribbon #1-2 (1949); the regular series started with #3 (Feb 1952).

Peter Rabbit #1 (Fago).

Range Busters #2-8 (Fox). This was a Fox one-shot dated Sep 1950. Charlton published #6-10 in 1955.

Romantic Love #4 (Quality). This one is confused with the Avon series.

Search for Love #3 (ACG).

Sensational Police Cases #1 (Avon). The real #1 is a giant, followed later by the regular series.

Silver Streak #22 and 24 (Gleason).

Sunday Funnies #1 (Harvey).

Super Duper #5, 8, 11 (Harvey). If these exist, they are Canadian.

Super Western Comics #2-4 (Youthful). This one is confused with Superior's Super Western Funnies #3-4.

Sweetie Pie #3-14 (Ajax).

Toyland #4, also nn giant (Fiction House). Only #1-3 exist.

Trapped #5 (Ace). Only #1-4 exist.

White Rider & Super Horse #1-3 (Star). Only issues #4-6 exist.

Wild Boy of the Congo #10 (St. John). Ziff-Davis #10 is the first issue; No St. John #10 exists.

Witty Comics #3-7. Only #1-2 exist.

Xmas Comics #3-6 (Fawcett, first series). The only issues are #1, 2 and 7 (first series) and #4-7 (second series).

over Fox material and tried to market it. If anyone has this odd issue, I hope you will contact me via CBM… I'd love to know more about it.

At any rate, this leads me into the topic of comics that do not exist, yet remain listed in the *Overstreet Price Guide*. This includes the following four Fox titles:

(a) *Cody of the Pony Express* was a #1 one-shot (September 1950), with the listed #2 and 3 in the "do not exist" category. A two-issue version of the movie serial of the same title was published in *Colossal Feature Stories* #33 and 34.

(b) Feature Stories Magazine #4, listed as October 1950, apparently does not exist.

(c) Jungle Jo #4 6 (supposedly dated November 1950, January 1951 and March 1951) do not exist.

(d) Range Busters #2-9 surely do not exist from Fox, but #1 (September 1950) has been found to exist. Charlton published #8 10 in 1955, apparently causing the confusion.

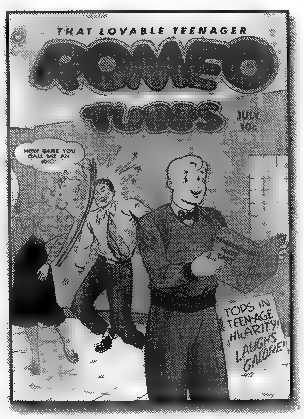
I nope this information helps Fox collectors, since so many of them seem to be springing up.

Now, of course, we have to wonder if any more "last gasp" Fox issues exist from 1951. Who knows? There were more than two dozen Fox titles discontinued in 1950, a year in which Fox published some 130 comics known to exist, including rebound giants.

I would love all you Fox collectors to let me know if there are any more previously undiscovered 1951 Fox issues. Check your collections, you just may have an undiscovered gem!

Since my previous two columns on this subject of whether certain comics exist, I've heard from several collectors. They have helped Dan Stevenson and I to confirm the existence of several titles that we were uncertain actually existed.

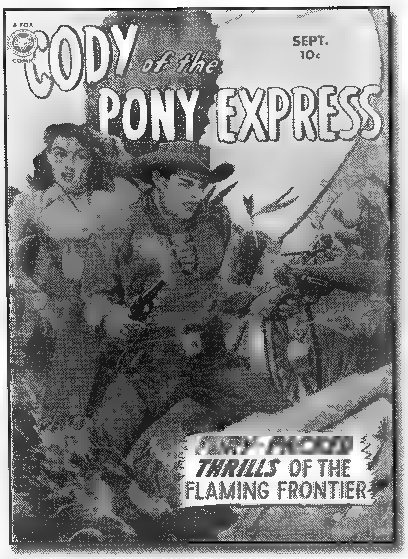
These include *All Top* #4-6, *Big Chief Wahoo* #7, *Cosmo Cat* #6-10, *Curley Kayo* #3-6, *New Romances* #21, *Range Busters* #1, *Silver Kid* #5 and *Teen-Age Diary Secrets* #7.



I acquired *Teen-Age Diary Secrets* #7, dated November 1949 and the first digest issue, in a trade with the noted Fox connoisseur Lee Dubroff, who collects with a fire, determination, and passion seldom seen in this hobby. Since Dan Stevenson recently acquired *Teen-Age Diary Secrets* #9, the other digest issue and dated August 1951, not September as previously believed, we were able to confirm that the insides are the same but the covers are different on these two issues, which were the only digest sized issues of an otherwise regular-sized title.

Both digest issues are considered extremely scarce Matt Baker items; but I would say #7 is the rarer. (The good news for those who collect only issues with Baker art is that now they don't have to worry about getting both issues, since the two different photo covers do not involve Baker art and the interiors are identical.)

For the sake of the Baker completists out there, I'll list the story titles in #7 so perhaps it can be discovered if any were reprinted later by St. John. They were all new at the time, as a check of my St. John romance pile showed. The titles are: "They Said I Was a Bad Influence," "My Secret Romance," "Too Busy for Kisses!," "Pride Made Me Love-Blind!," and "I Tried the Easy Way."



As I did with my previous two columns on this subject, I've included a list of issues that surely don't exist even though they are listed in the *Price Guide*, along with a list of issues that may exist even though we do not yet have proof. I would really like to solve these mysteries, so I'd appreciate any help you can provide. I heard from more than a dozen collectors last time, and I was grateful for the input.

Oh, and it should be noted that Dan Stevenson made one of the great comic book finds of the past year—locating an impossible-to-find copy of Standard's *New Romances* #21 (May 1954). We had both been looking for this for more than *15 years* without any luck.

Dan also made another big find: Ajax's *All-True Romance* #30 (July 1957). This is another title we have both been seeking for more than 15 years. We weren't even sure if it existed, but it was listed in an early *Overstreet Guide*, so we had to assume that it did exist.

The *All-True Romance* series is another of the great numbering mysteries in all of comics. The series ran from #1-19 in 1951-54 under the Artful/Harwell/Comic Media company, then the title skipped #20 after it was taken over by Ajax with the demise of Comic Media.

Why did *All-True Romance* skip #20? Probably because there were two #7 issues, the first dated September 1952 in the indicia and November 1952 on the cover… and the second dated November 1952 both inside and on the cover.

Somebody discovered the mistake and so the first Ajax issue was dated #22 (March 1955). The series ran through the recently discovered #30 (July 1957), only to be numbered #3 for September 1957 and #4 for November 1957. Then it returned to the correct sequence with #33 (February 1958). The series finished with #34 (June 1958), which I believe ties for the last Ajax.

Even though Cody of the Pony Express #2 and 3 are listed in the Guide, #1 (Sep 1950) is apparently the only issue. A two-issue version of the movie serial appeared under the same title in Colossal Features Magazine #33 and 34.

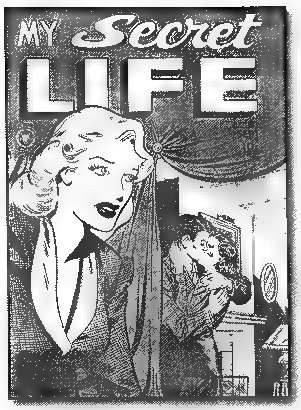
The almost never-seen Romeo Tubbs #28 (Jul 1950; Fox) is not pictured in Gerber's Photo-Journal Guide to Comic Books.

comic .. then the company apparently imploded.

All-True Romance is a great example of why being a comic book data detective can be both so frustrating and so fulfilling. Why, it only took Dan Stevenson and I about a dozen years to solve this problem!

Dan also made a nifty discovery when he found the missing issue of *Approved Comics*, a series of 1954 St. John reprints. Issue #10 (not listed in the *Price Guide)* is an issue of *Dinky Duck*. I believe these were newsstand comics, so this qualifies as another "new old" comic.

At this point, there are only three remaining romance comic mysteries, although I'm certainly not ruling out the discovery of further Fox 1951 issues. As for the first two mysteries, I have my doubts about the existence of either *Love Tales* #59 and *Love Trails* #2, both supposedly from Marvel. *Love Tales* was an interrupted series and for some reason seems to have skipped a number. The *Love Trails* entry apparently is simply an error, perhaps because DC's *Romance Trail* ran six issues and this was confused back in the early days of romance collecting.



The cover (shown here) and indicia prove that My Secret Life #27 (Sep 1951) is a newly-discovered Fox issue! The first #27 is dated more than a year earlier... July 1950!

The third mystery is one I would very much like to see solved.. Does Stanmoor's *Diary Confessions* #13 exist? Issue #12 (November 1955) definitely exists, as does #14 (April 1956). Dan has #12 and I have #14, both (we believe) are among the rarest comics of the period. But if there was ever a comic that once existed but no longer does, it may be *Diary Confessions* #13. The title was published in the last days of the tiny firm when the industry was in the throes of a post Comics Code slump.

As an inveterate indexer I am now looking at other related collectibles to investigate. For instance, I am presently trying to solve some of the many pulp magazine puzzles that still remain mysteries. There is still all kinds of undiscovered information about pulps just waiting for the light of day, since there is no truly accurate comprehensive index to the estimated 35,000 pulps published over a 60-year span.

The hero pulps and science fiction/weird magazines have been indexed to the point where probably every issue has been found. Most of the detective pulps have been well-indexed too, along with many of the westerns and anthology types. But there are two fields where pulp knowledge is still slim, indeed... romance pulps and sports pulps!

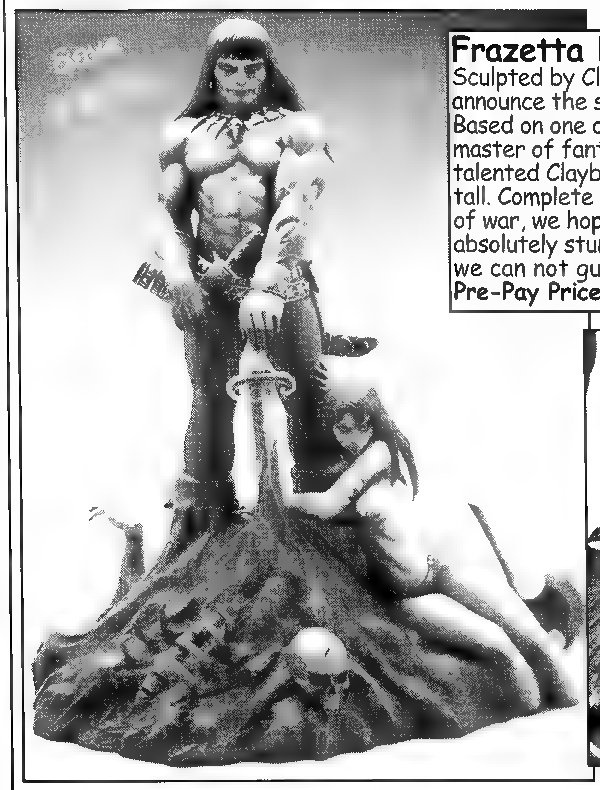
The recently published McFarland book, *Sports in the Pulp Magazines* carries one of the best available lists, yet my own collection of pulps reveals their volume contains numerous errors and omissions.

Most of the pulps published in the 1950s (and, contrary to conventional wisdom, there were well over 2,000 issues) are generally much scarcer than those of the '30s and '40s. Perhaps this is due to diminishing sales and smaller print runs. I recently obtained one of the last of the romance pulps... *Exciting Love* dated Spring 1957. On the cover is the blurb "combined with *Thrilling Love* and *Popular Love*." That, of course, tells me that those two titles no longer existed. Perhaps in a future Nolan's Notebook I'll discuss this exploding area of rare paper collectibles. Until then, may you enjoy a few discoveries of your own!

More Mysteries... Do They Exist?

The following books may not exist... but we can't say for sure! Can any CBM readers help confirm the existence of any of these remaining comic book mysteries? If not, historians and collectors will be forever wondering if these rare issues really exist...

Animal Crackers #1-2 (Fox 1946)
Blue Beetle #43 (Fox 1946)
Diary Confessions #13 (Stanmoor 1956)
Dinky Duck #10 (St. John 1954; An Approved Comics #10 with Dinky Duck exists, but does a regular issue #10?)
Dinky Duck #16 (St. John 1955; A Pines #16 Dinky Duck exists, so the St. John series probably ends with #15)
Dynamic Comics #25 (Superior 1948)
Flash Gordon #5 (Harvey 1951; Does anyone actually own a copy of this small-size last issue? It was supposedly sent only to "some mail subscribers," but we can't find anyone with a copy)
Lil' Genius #5 (Charlton 1955; The first four issues are entitled Super Brat from Toby and the Charlton series exists from #6 on. But does #5 really exist?)
Love Tales #59 (Atlas, 1952 or 1954; The first series apparently ends with #58 and picks up with #60, but we don't know if #59 exists)
Love Trails #2 (Atlas 1950)
Lucky Starr #8-14 (Nationwide; The first seven issues exist, but do the rest? We think it's unlikely)
Madhouse #4 (Ajax 1957; The #4 first series exists, but the second series may end with #3... not #4)
Merry-Go-Round #21 (1946; publisher?)
Romeo Tubbs #1 (Fox 1950; The only issues known confirmed to exist are #26 and 28)
They Ring the Bell (Fox 1946)
Tommy of the Big Top #10 (Standard #48)
Western Desperado Comics #8 (Fawcett 1940)
Western Killers no number issue (Fox 1948)



Frazetta Barbarian Statue

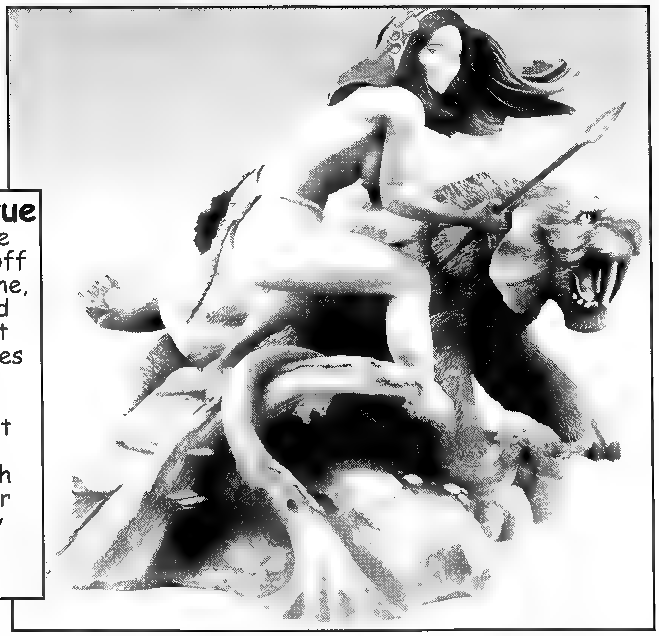
Sculpted by Clayburn Moore. Moore Creations, Inc. is pleased to announce the second in the Frazetta Masterpiece series, The Barbarian. Based on one of the most famous images in fantasy art, by the grand master of fantasy himself, Frank Frazetta, and sculpted by the talented Clayburn Moore, The Barbarian stands a towering 13 inches tall. Complete with voluptuous slave girl, skulls, carnage and the detritus of war, we hope you'll agree that this sculptural tour de Force is absolutely stunning. Ships in Dec. It should arrive for Christmas but we can not guarantee it.Order by Oct. 15th. Suggested Retail: $250.00.
Pre-Pay Price: $200.00 plus $13.95 S/H.

Check our web site for full color pictures!

FRAZETTA

Frazetta Cat Woman Statue

You've seen the picture, but now you see how the Cat Woman's prowess can once again catch you off guard if you're not careful. Frank Frazetta's lithe, curvaceous loincloth beauty is back for more wild safari hunting with her sabertooth pussycat that would just as soon eat you up like a bowl of 9 Lives cat food. Both characters are on the prowl, and looking to make their kill before sunset. Oblige them so as to avoid catching a nasty strain of cat scratch fever! Painted and ready to display. MATURE AUDIENCES. Put it next to your Death Dealer Statue. Ships in Dec. It should arrive for Christmas but we can not guarantee it. Order by Oct.15th. Suggested Retail: $195.00.
Pre-Pay price: 175.50 + $13.95 S/H



M&M

M & M COMIC SERVICE
13617 SOUTHWEST HWY.
ORLAND PARK, IL. 60462
Toll Free 1-888-MM-COMIC
That's 1-888-662-6642
www.mmcomics.com

Ill. residents add 7.75% sales tax Shipping is to any street address (no p o. boxes) in the continental 48 states. Call for other rates. Call or write with your order.

PART ONE: The Rise of Fantasy!

Anybody who collected comics back in what I call the dawn of the Marvel Age of Comics remembers that before The Fantastic Four first rocketed into the Van Allen radiation belt or the Hulk tasted his first gamma ray, Marvel was synonymous with big-monster fantasy books. Remembered with nostalgia by fans, too long neglected by serious collectors, these titles are now coming into their own, commanding prices equal to if not exceeding that of Marvel Universe issues.

You know the Big Four. Collectively, they are called pre-hero Marvels. Atlas holdovers *Strange Tales*, *Journey into Mystery*, and the twins, *Tales to Astonish* and *Tales of Suspense*, both of which debuted with the January, 1959 issues. Their reputations rest on a pure fantasy formula and a strict lineup exemplified by a long Jack Kirby Big Monster epic, followed by quieter tales by either Don Heck, Paul Reinman, closed out by a provocative Steve Ditko-drawn 5 pager.

Who hasn't purchased a coverless Marvel from that era and been driven to distraction trying to identify it? Because publisher Martin Goodman placed his indicia on the inside front cover instead of the bottom of page one, a pre-hero Marvel stripped of its cover is almost impossible to place without a comprehensive index. And try finding an index.

In essence—and most fans recognize this—Lee was publishing a weekly book with a rotating title! He might as well have called it "Journey into Strange Tales of Suspense to Astonish."

But it wasn't always so. In fact, the Big Four are not the monolithic megatitle most fans remember. They weren't even truly a Big Four!

To fully understand the birth of the new Marvel, you have to go back to the old Atlas line, that Bifrost bridge separating Martin Goodman's crashed comics group which virtually dropped dead in mid 1957—the troubled "Summer of Death" when his distribution dried up, leaving 75 comic books orphaned. Lee was forced to lay off his entire staff on what became known as "Black Thursday." Gone were people like John Romita, who was so upset he wouldn't speak to Lee again for months, and the so-called "Three Musty Beards," senior artists Bill Everett, John Severin, and Joe Maneely.

"Martin Goodman made one of the big publishing decision mistakes that was ever made in publishing," Stan Lee explains. "He had his own distribution company, Atlas. The books were doing fantastically. His business manager talked him into giving up Atlas and letting the American News Company (ANC) distribute him. Very shortly after he did that, American went out of business. We had no distribution. Martin couldn't go back to his own company because the wholesalers, to whom the distributors sent the books, got very angry because he had left them and gone to American. He couldn't form his own company anymore. So he had to go to DC and say, 'Will you guys distribute me?' They said, 'Yeah. But only eight books!'"

In a bizarre turn of events, DC's distributor, Independent News, gave its chief rival a new lease on life. While the eight-title restriction allowed for 16 titles published on a bi monthly schedule, in reality Goodman was being punished for glutting the stands in the lean mid-1950s. Very tentatively, after a hiatus of two months, Goodman began issuing new titles.

The reduced roster consisted of *Millie the Model*, *Patsy Walker*, *Patsy and Hedy*, *Battle*, *Navy Combat*, *Marines in Battle*, *Homer the Happy Ghost*, *Miss America*, *Love Romances*, *My Own Romance*, *Wyatt Earp*, *Gunsmoke Western*, *Kid Colt*, *Two-Gun Kid*, and only two fantasy titles, *Strange Tales*, and *World of Fantasy*. Whenever Goodman launched a new title, an old one would be extinguished.

But Goodman's comics line was by no means out of the woods. The real reason Independent News agreed to the *(Continued on page 25)*

Journey into of Suspense

Strang to Asto

e Tales nish

By Will Murray

STORIES & CHARACTERS © 1999 MEG

THE IRON MAN MYSTERY!

As this issue was going to press, a new wrinkle in the mysterious delay in introducing a superhero into *Tales of Suspense* surfaced. Actually, it had been under my nose all the time, in the 1997 *Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide*'s "Market Report." Reproduced was the splash page to Don Heck's origin of Iron Man. A familiar image, but this was the original art, complete with margin notes which included the job number, X-51, and an unexpected date... November 1962.

I stared at the black Magic-Markered date in disbelief. November 1962, not March 1963—the cover date of *Tales of Suspense* #39. Now I know enough about job numbers to know they're more or less contemporary with other stories bearing the same cover date. I looked at other numbers in the X series. The closest I found were very close indeed: X-47 and X-48, the stories published in *The Incredible Hulk* #5, cover-dated January 1963. *Fantastic Four* #10, January 1963 was X-38. Next month's *Fantastic Four* #11 was X-78. Most job numbers close to X-51 were contemporary with Marvels cover-dated January and February 1963, on sale in November or December.

It was starting to look like the origin of Iron Man was initially scheduled for an earlier *Tales of Suspense* than #39. But which? The date suggested #35, the issue where *TOS* changed logos. But the job number suggested a slightly later issue, like #37 or #38. Unfortunately the issue date on the art was unreadable and cannot be verified, and I can't say for certain if it represents the cover date or the on-sale date.

Now the possibility that Iron Man was prepared five issues before it actually debuted fits perfectly with the drumbeat of heroes who paraded out of Marvel's magazines at that time. Both Thor and Spider-Man came out with August 1962 cover dates. Ant-Man came next, in September, followed by the Human Torch in October. If Iron Man was planned to follow the next month, he would absolutely have debuted in November.

If we assume this was the original plan, why did Stan Lee delay Iron Man's premiere?

The answer may lie in the convoluted creation of the character. It was Kirby who designed the armor, but Lee, Larry Leiber, and artist Don Heck—who contrary to many published reports did not work over Kirby layouts—produced the origin story.

Why Heck? Simple. Kirby was too busy. Heck has said he found drawing Iron Man's armor difficult in that first story, and offered Lee an alternative armor for the second story. But Lee thought it no better than Kirby's admittedly clunky apparatus. Perhaps no one was satisfied with Iron Man's early appearance.

Imagine Lee and Martin Goodman looking over the new feature. Goodman remarks the first story looks okay, but can Heck carry the feature himself? With the exception of Spider-Man, Kirby always drew the origin stories. On reconsideration, Lee decides to hold Iron Man back until Kirby has time to do stories #2 and 3, modifying the helmet, making other small design changes, and incidentally giving him a gold paint job to freshen-up his looks. Heck picks up the penciling with the fourth Iron Man tale, with Kirby backstopping every so often to keep the book on the Marvel style.

It all fits. It explains why *Tales of Suspense* was kept going as a fantasy book into 1963. It probably explains why its logo was changed. Both *Tales of Suspense* and *Tales to Astonish* sported similar logos. Not a problem when both featured identical fantasy contents, but when they shifted over to showcasing the very different adventures of Ant-Man and Iron Man, prospective purchasers would need a way to tell them apart.

new distribution deal was to carry Goodman's lucrative men's interest magazines. The comics were just along for the ride.

Thus, by late 1958, the much-shrunken Timely/Atlas line was hanging on by a thread. Sales were slumping. The Bullpen had been disbanded. Page rates were low. Lee had to work with virtually no staff, yet maintain a fixed group of 16 titles. His solution: Purchase inventory by the pound and pour it into his homogenized books without regard to what the mastnead read.

Everybody agrees that the Marvel Age of Fantasy started with the debut of *Strange Worlds* #1 (December 1958). It was the blueprint of what was to come: A Jack Kirby cover enwrapping an assortment of stories by such lights as Steve Ditko, Don Heck, Joe Sinnott and Paul Reinman. It became a movement with the simultaneous debuts of *Tales to Astonish* and *Tales of Suspense* in January, 1959.

But history was not as simple as that. After a pause in 1957, Lee had reactivated *Strange Tales* and *World of Fantasy*, filling them with inventory purchased before the collapse of Atlas. Sales must have climbed, because with the November, 1958 issue he brought back the long-dead *Journey into Mystery*. Things were looking up.

These early fantasy stories weren't much different than the stuff Lee had been running in the likes of *Astonishing* and *Strange Stories of Suspense* before the distribution catastrophe. They fell into a handful of neat categories: Flying saucer tales. Alien allegories. Time travel paradoxes. Ghost stories. Robot rampages. Mummy mysteries. And various revenge and retribution yarns. All five pages long. And all scripted by long forgotten writers like Hank Chapman, Carl O. Wessler, and Don Rico... and drawn by everyone from Bill Everett to Jerry Robinson. Lee was content to edit, writing only what appealed to him.

"I was doing everything the way my publisher wanted me to," Lee recalls, "I was very much a company man. I wasn't a rebel. Hey, that's the way you want 'em. You're paying my salary. Fine." Still, Lee admitted chafing under the commercial restrictions of writing for an audience he liked to call "the bubblegum brigade."

Lee might have continued in this undistinguished vein except for the return of Jack Kirby. It was Kirby who penciled the cover and lead story to *Strange Worlds* #1, ushering in the new look of Marvel. The additions of Steve Ditko and Don Heck—both of whom had worked intermittently for Lee in the past -gave the books a fresh, splashy non-Atlas look.

Conspicuously absent was Lee's favorite illustrator and top cover artist of the Atlas era—Joe Maneely. He would have surely been the chief artist on the new books, but for his unfortunate death earlier in the year. His passing left a gaping hole in Lee's roster of artists.

"I think if Joe Maneely had not died," Lee recounts, "he would have been the stellar artist in the business today. He was one of the fastest artists I ever knew, and among the most versatile. He did war stuff. He did weird. He did historical stuff. He did westerns. He did comedy. He could do *anything*. He was so fast, he could do a strip almost without penciling it. He'd draw the borders and he'd put a little stick figure here and there, and then he'd take his pen or his brush and start inking. He was incredible."

Don Heck remembers, "After Maneely died, Stan called me to see if I'd do some work. The price in those days was around $20 per page to pencil and ink, and I think DC's average at that time was $38. It didn't pick up until 1964-65, and, even then, it didn't go up all that much. A couple of bucks a page.

"That's one of the things Marvel did which was nice," Heck adds. "Stan got a whole bunch of talented people doing all this stuff, and it looked all different. Kirby would generally do the first story in the book, a 10-pager, and we'd wind up doing 5-pagers and 6-pagers. Kirby was better at monster stories; he was a creative genius. What're you going to do? He could take anything and make it into something."

The lineup for that historic first issue of *Strange Worlds* was virtually the blueprint for what was to come:

Jack Kirby's "I Know the Secret of the Flying Saucers!"

Steve Ditko's "I Captured the Abominable Snowman!"

Joe Sinnott's "I am Robot!"

Don Heck's " I am the Last Man on Earth!"

The first-person formula was a format they were using over at DC's *My Greatest Adventure*, where Jack Kirby had been doing very similar stories, and would mark the first year of the revived Marvel's fantasy titles. But it would be unfair to ascribe that borrowing to either Lee or Kirby aping DC. Probably everyone copied it from the proliferation of so-called "men's sweat" magazines like *Argosy*, or Martin Goodman's own *Stag* and *Man Stories* that choked newsstands in those days.

Certainly Lee couldn't be accused of copying DC's formula. His fantasy books and Julie Schwartz' hard science titles like *Strange Adventures* and *Mystery in Space* were light-years apart. One assumes Lee stressed fantasy over SF because he preferred to write about characters in emotional situations. The DC puzzle story was not his cup of tea. Fantasy also meant one didn't have to be a stickler for scientific accuracy—or for that matter, logic. Lee was selling escape, not brain teasers.

"It's a strange thing," he admits frankly. "I have never done reference. I hate research."

Amazingly, the astute Lee did not at first realize the powerhouse resource he had in Kirby. While Kirby did the cover and main story for *Tales to Astonish* #1, Don Heck did the cover to *Tales of Suspense*'s debut issue. Ditko held cover honors for the second issues of those titles, as well as *Strange Worlds* #2. Sinnott executed the cover to *Journey in Mystery* #50 and *Tales of Suspense* #3, while Russ Heath was responsible for *JIM* #51's cover. In many issues, Kirby was nowhere to be found!

For the first few months of 1959, Jack Kirby appeared only intermittently in the six fantasy titles Lee was editing. Plainly, Lee did not single out Kirby, or anyone, else as a "star." It's likely he would let fan mail or sales dictate who shone brightest. Understandable. Kirby had just left DC Comics after launching *Challengers of the Unknown* and getting into legal hot water with his editor. His partnership with Joe Simon was fading. In the pocket universe of comic books, the once and future King of Comics was a man without a country.

Thus, Kirby was hardly to be seen in *Strange Worlds* and *World of Fantasy*. Perhaps that was why with the August issues, both magazines were put to sleep, in favor of *Kathy* and *A Date With Millie*, leaving only the true Big Four standing.

It didn't take Lee very long to realize that leading with a Jack Kirby story, wrapped around a Kirby cover, was the equivalent of putting your best talon forward. Replacing Kirby inkers like Patsy Walker's Chris Rule with more solid embellishers went a long way to bringing out Kirby's strengths, too. Once he figured that out, the rest fell into place. Former mainstays like Human Torch creator Carl Burgos, Doug Wildey (later of *Johnny Quest* fame on TV), Matt Baker, Sol Brodsky, and Joe Sinnott—whose aliens looked like they all came from the same dull planet —virtually vanished from their old haunts. The backup artists became Don Heck, who usually occupied the second slot, Paul Reinman, or John Forte following, with a neat little trick ending story to round out the book, usually signed S. Ditko.

"Once a week I'd get a script in the mail," Don Heck reports. "I had no idea where it was going. There was no 'bullpen communication.' When

you sent in a story, you didn't know where it was going to be used. I always figured if it was the first story or the last, then you were all right. If you wound up in the number 3 slot, they didn't think that much of the story."

In fact, there was no bullpen at all. The old Atlas bullpen had been broken up years ago. Stan was maintaining a fiction of bygone glory days he thought he'd never see again. The so-called bullpen all worked at home and hardly ever met. Heck remembers bumping into Ditko only once. Joe Sinnott linked Jack Kirby for decades before finally meeting his collaborator.

Editor Lee also doubled as the writer—a dual role he had enjoyed before. Probably some of the earliest fantasy stories were drawn to leftover scripts. But there's evidence that some of the artists had more to do with their tales than just break down a Stan Lee script. Don Heck produced two different 1960 stories with the same theme and title, "I am the Beast-Man!" But this may have been mere coincidence.

The probability that Steve Ditko played a greater role in his fantasy work for Lee is strongly suggested by a story he drew for *Strange Worlds* #5—"I Couldn't Stop the Runway Comet!" Set in the future, it details the dilemma of future Earth resident Victor Sage, whose faith in a scientific solution to any problem is challenged when no method of averting a comet heading toward Earth can be found. Structurally and thematically, it bears an uncanny resemblance to stories Ditko would write and draw in the future. And the fact that his protagonist's name resurfaced as the civilian identity of his later Charlton character, the Question, seems beyond the realm of coincidence.

In fact, Ditko confirmed his true role is his 1990 article, "An Insider's Art of Comics History: Jack Kirby's Spider-Man."

"Briefly, in regards to our working method, Stan provided the plot ideas. There would be a discussion to clear up anything, consider options and so forth. I would then do the panel/page breakdowns, pencil the visual story continuity and, on a separate paper, produce a very rough panel dialogue, merely as a guide for Stan."

These working scripts, which Ditko provided typed on typing paper, were then used by Stan when he wrote the final, finished dialogue. Ditko recalls that Lee would sometimes follow his script suggestions, and at other times largely ignore them. On occasion, Lee didn't bother with the formalities of a plot session. At least twice, Ditko recalls Lee handing him an old Atlas fantasy comic with the suggestion that he redo a certain tale in his own style. One of these "refrys" involved little toy men from *Journey into Mystery* #58. The other was a flying saucer yarn. Once Ditko was given the finished art to a (presumably published) John Romita story, and instructed to reinterpret the tale.

One unsung hero of this time was a writer whose byline never appeared: Larry Lieber. Even with a reduced line of titles to put out, the prolific Lee was not up to scripting them all. He needed a writer. Enter his younger brother Larry, fresh out of the Air Force. Larry was no stranger to Marvel. He had drawn Atlas stories on and off since 1951, but his comics career never took flight. Lee needed a writer he could train and trust.

"I felt I had to earn a living," Lieber recalls. "I wasn't fast enough at drawing comics, so Stan asked me if I wanted to write comics. I said, 'I don't know how to write them.' And he says, 'You can write. I read your letters in the service.' He taught me to write. That's when I started writing *Journey into Mystery, Tales of Suspense,* and *Tales to Astonish.*"

Lee gave Lieber the plot to a romance script as a test, and after some Lee editing, the result was good enough to publish. In fact, prior to the collapse of Atlas, Lieber was both writing and drawing stories for *Love Romances* and other Goodman love comics. He was one of the few Atlas returnees.

"Actually Stan liked his own plot so much he made up all the plots and he would give me a synopsis," Lieber reveals. "Remember I was just learning to write. And I'd go home and sit in the park in Tudor City, break it down, try to figure out a story and put in the dialogue. I'd bring it back to Stan and he'd go over it. He'd say, 'You don't need this. Change that.' And of course everything he touched he improved. And that was how I did those stories."

Pre-hero Marvel collectors have long have puzzled over the question of why Stan Lee signed just the tales drawn by Steve Ditko and only after the fall of 1961. The truth is simple. Stan signed everything he scripted. Between 1959 and late 1961, Stan Lee's signature is nowhere to be found in any of the Big Four titles. Brother Larry was the chief writer of those formative titles! Curiously, Stan was content to script the likes of *Millie the Model,* and *Kid Colt, Outlaw.*

"I remember I was living in Tudor City then, and the books had three stories in them usually," Lieber points out. "Usually the lead story was by Jack Kirby, and then Don Heck or somebody else. Steve Ditko would do the last one. And the last one Stan wrote himself. Those were special stories with Stan. He liked working with Ditko."

Of course, Stan either revised or edited Larry's scripts for publication, making the two brothers in effect collaborators, if not co-authors. And they were full scripts, too. Some Marvel experts claim the so-called Marvel Method of scripting, in which artist works from a plot idea with the scripting over the penciled art, originated in this era. While this may be true with the Lee-Ditko tales, the Marvel Method was not universally adopted until the first wave of superheroes, years in the future.

"I was almost like a person who nobody knew existed," Lieber adds. "I went down to Marvel Comics for a Christmas party. I walked in there and I felt, 'Oh my God. I remember the beginning.' The beginning was on 60th Street and Madison Avenue on the second floor of Magazine Management. Business was not good. As a matter of fact when I started writing I said to Martin Goodman, 'I'm thinking of my future. Tell me, how would you describe the comic industry?' He said, 'I'd call it a dying industry.' It was just hanging on. They'd put out these few books. Stan was there alone and he was making most of the corrections himself. He didn't have a real office. I would go up there and he would give me the synopsis and I'd go home to my apartment in Tudor City or sit in the park and I'd break it down with pictures."

Don Heck remembers much the same dreary, Dickensian atmosphere.

"The Bullpen wasn't anything at that point!" he laughs. "The Bullpen was this small office Stan Lee had in there, where, if you happened to walk in, you'd probably have to repair somebody else's job, because Stan Lee told the guy, 'I need it tomorrow, and it's six pages. Could I have it?'"

Marvel's distinctive, moody coloring was the work of Stan Goldberg, who drew *Millie the Model* when he wasn't coloring monsters and aliens. He remembers Lee insisting the critical panel of every page being red or predominantly red. In his rush to meet deadlines, Goldberg often colored the entire panel a primary red. He also had a preference for moody gray covers—one that caused production problems with the later debuts of the Hulk and Iron Man—until Lee expressly forbid gray as a cover hue. Ironically, gray was one of the two colors Marvel had that DC did not. The other was a faithful fleshtone.

Big Brown Monsters

Somewhere in the evolution of his fantasy line, Stan hit upon the key to success. The Big Brown Monster. Technically, the Big Brown Monster was the orange-brown hue of the Fantastic Four's Thing. Some of them were Hulk green or Hulk gray. No one claims the BBM concept was a Lee or Lieber or Kirby innovation. Big monsters went back to Godzilla, and were a staple of 1950's horror films. Once Lee decided to go the big monster route, he discovered the obvious: Big Brown Monsters needed room in which to run amok. The lead Kirby stories were expanded to seven pages to accommodate their necessary rampages!

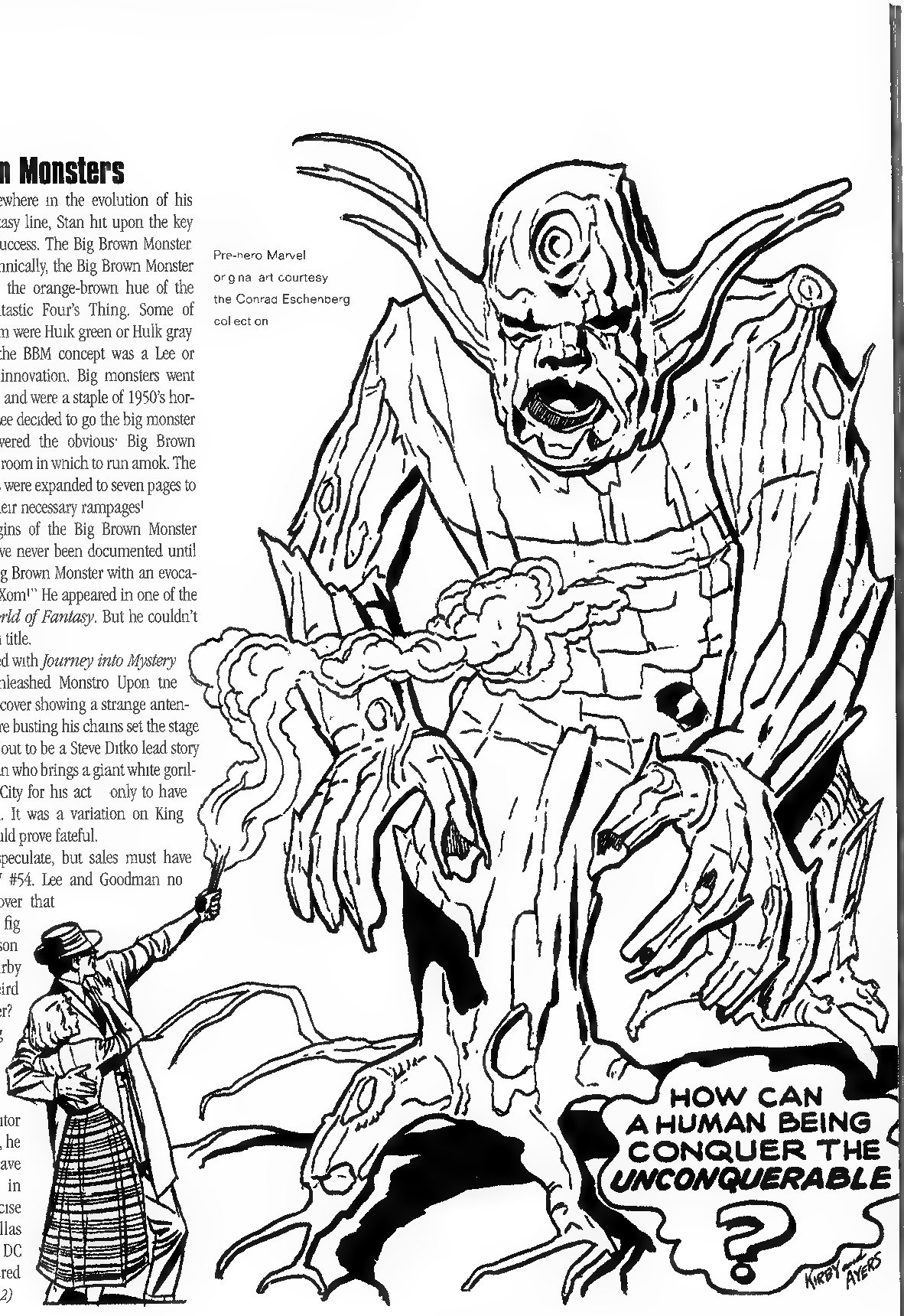
The true origins of the Big Brown Monster Marvel craze have never been documented until now. The first Big Brown Monster with an evocative name was "Xom!" He appeared in one of the last issues of *World of Fantasy*. But he couldn't save the doomed title.

It really started with *Journey into Mystery* #54, and "I Unleashed Monstro Upon the World!" A Kirby cover showing a strange antennaed ape creature busting his chains set the stage for what turned out to be a Steve Ditko lead story about a magician who brings a giant white gorilla to New York City for his act — only to have him go berserk. It was a variation on King Kong, but it would prove fateful.

I can only speculate, but sales must have jumped on *JIM* #54. Lee and Goodman no doubt poured over that book, trying to figure out the reason. Was it the Kirby cover? The weird ape like monster? The striking name of Monstro?

If they had talked to DC editor Julius Schwartz, he could have explained it in three concise words: "Gorillas sell comics." DC had discovered

(Cont. on page 52)



Pre-hero Marvel original art courtesy the Conrad Eschenberg collection

A CBM EXCLUSIVE

Marvel's Mystery Man...
Larry Lieber

Interview by Arnold T. Blumberg **PART I: LO, THERE WAS A BEGINNING!**

For years, Marvel Comics writer and artist Larry Lieber has too often been kept out of the spotlight, relegated to the position of "Stan Lee's younger brother." Now, *Comic Book Marketplace* takes a fascinating look at the career of this talented comic book creator as he recounts, in his own words, the events that brought him to the world of comics and shaped a career that continues to this day with his work on the *Spider-Man* newspaper strip. In an exclusive three part interview, we learn about Larry's early days as an art student and airman during the Korean War, his first days as a writer with Marvel Comics under the tutelage of his brother Stan, his eventual blossoming as a writer and artist during the "Marvel Age," and his later achievements on the *Incredible Hulk* and *Spider-Man* newspaper serials. In Part I of this historic account, Larry talks about the beginnings of his professional life and his early experiences in comics just prior to the dawning of the "Marvel Age..."

ARNOLD BLUMBERG: *Let's start at the very beginning. Were you always interested in comics, Larry?*

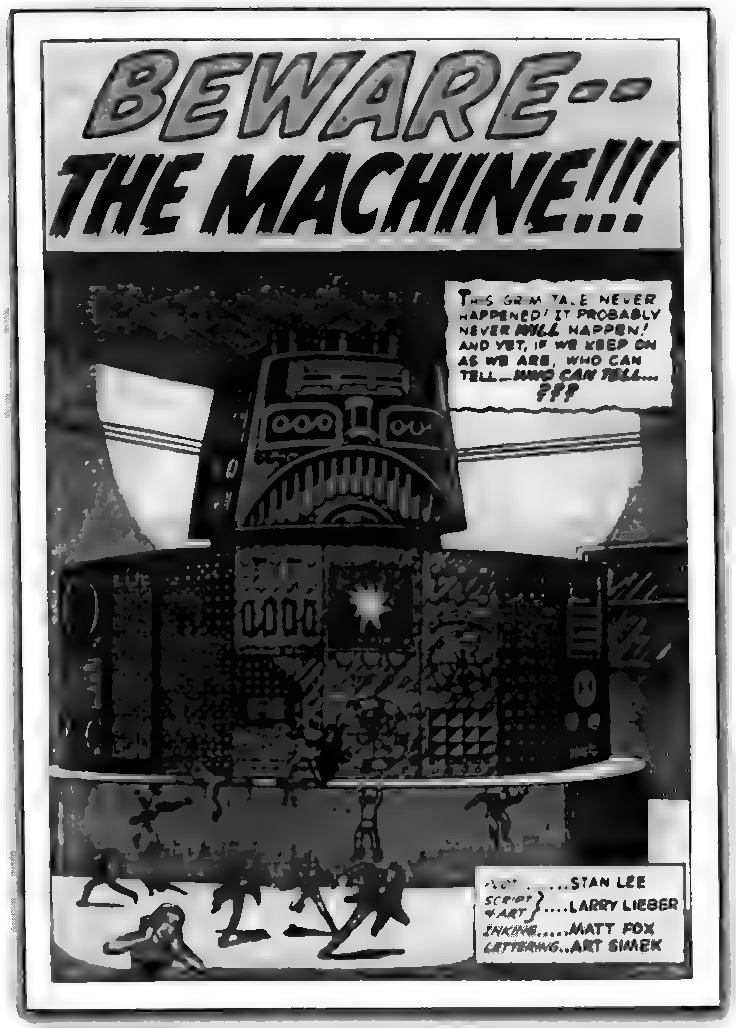
LARRY LIEBER: As a kid, well before I was in the industry, I liked to draw. I don't know if it was because I was reading comics or just because I liked it. As you know, Stan [Lee] is my brother, and during World War II he was working at Marvel—Timely—as an editor. My uncle, Robbie Solomon, was also working there. I remember Jack Kirby was there at the time too, but he was going off to war. Captain America interested me very much. They had a club back then, "The Sentinels of Liberty," and I had a badge and a card and everything!

One day, my uncle took me to the office. I was so young then, and Jack drew a picture for me. It was a sketch of the heads of Captain American and Bucky saying "Hi, Larry!" and Jack and Joe Simon both signed it. That impressed me very much.

ARNOLD: *When did your interest turn into the start of a career?*

LARRY: I graduated high school, and I was working in a

The ST #111 classic "Beware the Machine" script and pencils by Lieber, inks by Matt Fox (1963)


BEWARE--
THE MACHINE!!!
THIS GRIM TALE NEVER HAPPENED! IT PROBABLY NEVER WILL HAPPEN! AND YET, IF WE KEEP ON AS WE ARE, WHO CAN TELL...WHO CAN TELL... ???
....STAN LEE
SCRIPT & ART ....LARRY LIEBER
INKING.....MATT FOX
LETTERING...ART SIMEK

lettering studio, and as a messenger for a while with the *New York Times*. Eventually I had a job with magazine management, the other part of Timely I can't recall exactly, but I think they were the other part of the company or the parent company. They put out other books besides the comics… like movie and romance books. After the war, Stan was back and he was editing all of the comics while I was working in this other department doing paste-ups. I wasn't even doing layouts, just paste-ups.

I was also going to Pratt Art Institute in Brooklyn at night. I was studying illustration, which was my real goal. I loved those illustrations like the ones Norman Rockwell did for *Saturday Evening Post*, or the other magazines like *Colliers* and *Ladies' Home Journal*. I thought, 'I'll do comics first, and then graduate and become a magazine illustrator'...that's what I thought, anyway.

ARNOLD: *I take it your course of study didn't turn out the way you planned.*

LARRY: The Korean War came along, and I enlisted in the Air Force. I never finished the course or ever really learned to paint, but I got some drawing out of it.

ARNOLD: *How long did you serve?*

LARRY: I was in the service for four years, two on Okinawa. I was an artist in the service as a matter of fact, and here's a typical service story for you. There was no classification for an artist unless you were a sergeant already—I think they called it Airman First Class. I was an Airman Third Class, so they couldn't classify me as an artist—instead, they classified me as a draftsman! I didn't know a damn thing about drafting [*laughter*]. I was stationed at Samson Air Force base in Geneva, which is in upstate New York.

ARNOLD: *What were your duties as an artist in the Air Force?*

LARRY: I drew training aids, charts, graphs, etc. I almost did a comic strip too, but then a call came that they needed a draftsman in the Orient. I said, "I'm not a draftsman!" and they said, "That's what you're classified as, aren't you?" So I went overseas. When I arrived with no qualifications, I was lucky they didn't kill me [laughter].

I worked in training aids there, but then they wanted an eagle painted onto their squadron emblem. I had never finished my course in painting! I don't remember how I did it, but I got some cans of paint and a picture of an eagle from *Life Magazine* or something like that and started painting. It took me a long time to do, and when the executive officer came in with this sour look on his face—he was very impatient with me—until he saw the finished eagle and said, "this was worth waiting for!" I had my picture taken and I was in the base newspaper, and that was the highlight of my career in the service [*laughter*]

ARNOLD: *After growing up in New York, all this traveling must have been at least a little strange. Did you ever suffer any culture shock?*

LARRY: I thought it was interesting. For one thing, travel teaches you that the whole world isn't New York! There are other people and other ways they look at things, particularly the Okinawans. After Okinawa, I got sent back to the States, to Del Rio, Texas, where I was in training aids again. I went to a restaurant there once and walked in on a bunch of movie actors making a picture there!

"Man Alone" by LL, art by Don Heck

ARNOLD: *After your service in the Air Force was completed, did you go right back to Stan and the comics?*

LARRY: Well, when I came out, I knew I wanted to get back to art and continue my studies. I went to the Art Students' League for a while, where I studied anatomy and drawing with some good people. I also

got into a course with a guy who was a very good painter and illustrator. His name was Frank Riley. It was a great course, but I had to leave for various reasons. I had to go earn a living, and again I never got to learn painting! It was then, in order to earn some money, that I started with Stan, and I started by doing writing, not drawing.

ARNOLD: *That's an unusual beginning for an artist. How did this arrangement come about?*

LARRY: Stan told me he needed a writer, and I told him that I'm not a writer. But he didn't need artists, and I was too slow as an artist at that time. This was 1958, and Stan was doing all the writing for the comics himself! He told me "I read your letters in the service, you're a writer." So I started with him in June of 1958, and that began my course in writing with Stan

ARNOLD: *This is a point in time just prior to when most fans are familiar with the Marvel creative team. Were there any other familiar faces there?*

LARRY: There were no other writers, but I think Sol Brodsky and Flo Steinberg may have been there already, as well as the colorist, Stan Goldberg may have been there at that time. This was before Stan Goldberg drew Archie. I think Stan [Lee] had tried a couple of writers, but they didn't work out, so he wanted to use me.

ARNOLD: *What did you start working on in 1958?*

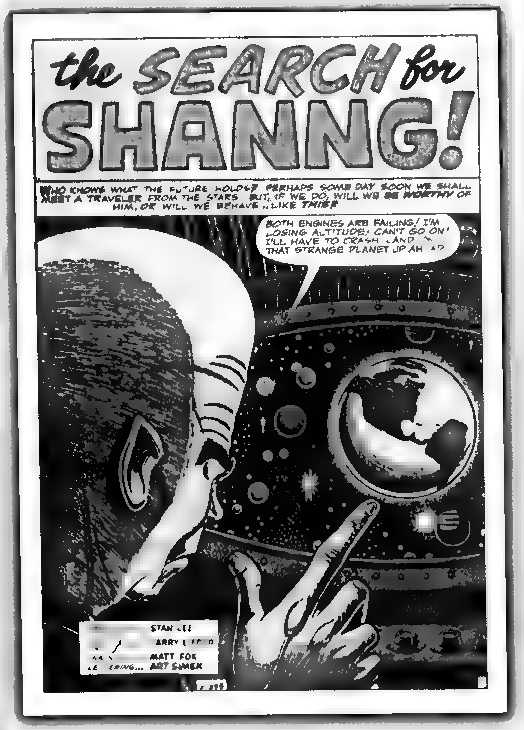
LARRY: This was when Stan was putting out the monster titles… *Tales to Astonish, Tales of Suspense, Strange Tales,* and *Journey Into Mystery*… all of those, with artists like Jack Kirby, who usually did the lead story, and Don Heck, who also did some stories.

ARNOLD: *Steve Ditko was there as well…*

LARRY: Oh yes, Ditko was there, often doing the third story in the book. I was just starting to write, and I knew nothing about story writing. Stan made up all of the plots and titles and then he would give them to me and say, "Go write a story!" [Laughs] I had a sense of the visual, since I had drawn before, and so I did know something about storytelling. I would sit there and draw it out first before I started typing. I remember laying it out in pencil, picture after picture.

the HUMAN TORCH
Starring in: "THE RETURN OF THE WIZARD!"
PLOT.....STAN LEE
SCRIPT.....LARRY LIEBER
ART.....JACK KIRBY
INKING.....DICK AYERS
LETTERING...ART SIMEK
SETTLE BACK AND GET A TIGHT GRIP ON YOURSELF, FOR YOU ARE ABOUT TO WITNESS ANOTHER THRILLING ENCOUNTER BETWEEN THE HUMAN TORCH AND THAT EVIL GENIUS OF CRIME KNOWN AS—THE WIZARD!!
YOU WERE A FOOL TO ACCEPT MY CHALLENGE, TORCH! YOU'RE IN MY TRAP—AND YOU'LL NEVER LEAVE HERE ALIVE!
I'VE HEARD ALL THOSE THREATS BEFORE, WIZARD! BUT I'M STILL HERE, AND THE GUYS WHO MADE 'EM- AREN'T!!
ALL CHARACTERS, STORIES, ART © 1999 MEG.

Splash panel for "The Return of the Wizard!" script by Larry Lieber, pencils by Jack Kirby, and inks by Dick Ayers (Strange Tales #105, Feb 1963)


the SEARCH for SHANNG!
WHO KNOWS WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS? PERHAPS SOME DAY SOON WE SHALL MEET A TRAVELER FROM THE STARS. BUT, IF WE DO, WILL WE BE WORTHY OF HIM, OR WILL WE BEHAVE ...LIKE THIS?
BOTH ENGINES ARE FAILING! I'M LOSING ALTITUDE! CAN'T GO ON! I'LL HAVE TO CRASH ...AND THAT STRANGE PLANET UP AH...?
STAN LEE
LARRY LIEBER
MATT FOX
ART SIMEK

"The Search for Shanng!" script & pencils by LL, inks by Matt Fox (Strange Tales #112, 1963)

"the MYSTERY of the PURPLE PLANET!"
I'M APPROACHING EARTH! AS SOON AS I LAND, I'LL HAVE TO TELL THEM EVERYTHING! THE WHOLE GHASTLY STORY!
PLOT: STAN LEE
SCRIPT: LARRY LIEBER
ART: PAUL REINMAN
LETTERING: RAY HOLLOWAY

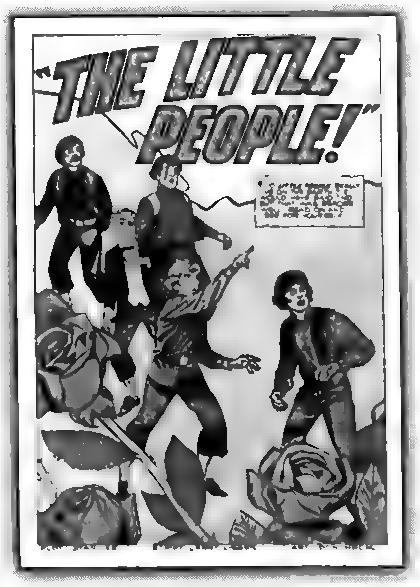
"Purple Planet" by LL, art by Reinman; "5th Demension" by LL, art by Kirby. Both early 1960s.

ARNOLD: *You actually drew your own storyboards before you wrote a script?*

LARRY: Exactly, because I was unsure just starting with the typewriter. Stan would go over my work and he taught me whatever I wound up learning about writing stories. He'd say "see how you can say it this way, you can say it that way," or "no, that's wrong," or "too many words," and it was a whole writing course I got from Stan.

ARNOLD: *Was it a good working relationship?*

LARRY: It was great, but it was also… well how should I say this… he wasn't always patient [*laughs*]. He was patient at first, but not always, because he'd never done this with anybody else before, I think. Since I was the only writer he had, he had no one else to compare me to. All he knew was that he knew how to write, he's telling me how to write, and gee, it's not coming out too fast sometimes! But over all, he was a good teacher and I felt totally inadequate compared to him, because he knew what he was doing and it came so easily to him.



ARNOLD: *How about Jack Kirby? What was your working relationship with him?*

I remember I was living in a little room, working on this writing, and Jack was drawing so fast that Stan was always saying "Jack needs another story!" So I would rush to the post office on Saturday night and mail stories to him. Jack could draw faster than I could write, which was unusual between a writer and an artist. In fact, Jack once told me he could do six pages a day of the monster books, "but when I do the westerns I slow down to five pages because of the gun belts!" He had to put all those gun belts in and I guess it took him more time [*laughs*].

ARNOLD: *What was the mood of the bullpen at that time?*

LARRY: There wasn't even a bullpen, it was just Stan. He was doing everything himself! The business was very small, he was only putting out a few books, and I don't imagine they were doing too well. I remember I spoke to the owner, [Martin] Goodman, and I asked him how he'd describe the comic business. He said to me, "I'd call it a dying industry." And at that point it was. We were doing mainly those few monster books.

Panel from "We Search the Stars!" script & pencils by LL, inks by Matt Fox (ST #110, 1963)

"The Little People" script by LL, art by Don Heck (ST #103, Dec 1962)

Things would change soon enough for Larry and the rest of the Marvel team, and the world of comics would never be the same again. Join us in the next issue of CBM *for an insider's look at the birth and development of the "Marvel Age" of comics, as we continue our conversation with Larry Lieber in "Marvel's Mystery Man, Part II: Superheroes and Six Guns!"*

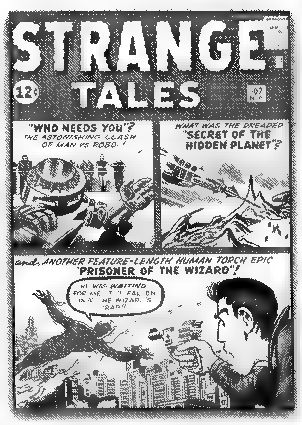
I MUST CHANGE INTO THE TORCH AND SAVE HIM! NO ONE ELSE CAN! BUT IF I FLAME ON, MYSELF--EVERYONE HERE WILL LEARN MY SECRET IDENTITY!

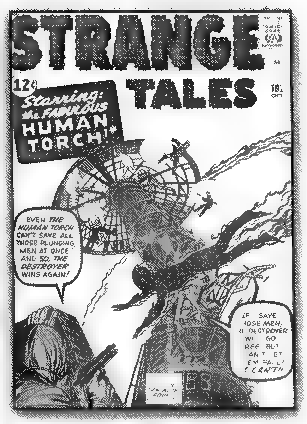
JOHNNY STORM'S ALTER-IDENTITY CRISIS!

"IT'S A GOOD THING THE TOWN ISN'T AWARE OF MY SECRET IDENTITY!"

BY TONY SEYBERT

Picture this scene from a 1963 Marvel comic book and try to guess the identity of the protagonist. Our hero is a teenager who first appeared in another magazine and has had his own series for a few months. He lives in a New York suburb with a female relative. In his civilian identity, he goes to the bank to put some money into his savings account and almost writes the name of his alter ego on the deposit slip. "Have to be more careful! . . It would take only one such accident for my secret identity to be discovered!" A strange, costumed figure arrives to rob the bank and our hero is unable to go into action because of the crowd. Clandestinely, he uses his powers to cre


STRANGE TALES
"WHO NEEDS YOU?" THE ASTONISHING CLASH OF MAN VS ROBO!
WHAT WAS THE DREADED "SECRET OF THE HIDDEN PLANET"?
AND ANOTHER FEATURE-LENGTH HUMAN TORCH EPIC "PRISONER OF THE WIZARD"!



IT'S A GOOD THING THE TOWN ISN'T AWARE OF MY OTHER IDENTITY! THE LESS PUBLICITY I HAVE THE BETTER I LIKE IT! AFTER ALL, I DON'T GET MY KICKS BY BEING CONSIDERED A FLAMING FREAK!

ate a diversion that enables him to run into an alley where he assumes his colorful superhero identity and begins his pursuit of the fleeing villain.

It's not Peter Parker, Spider-Man, hurtling through the air after one member or another of his Bad Guy's Bestiary.

Our hero is Johnny Storm, the Human Torch, passionately pursuing Paste Pot Pete, from the fourth issue of his solo series in *Strange Tales* # 104, cover dated January 1963.

If the reader thinks this sounds odd, he or she is not alone. In the Fantastic Four, it was established from the very beginning that none of the members of the colorful quartet had secret identities. Johnny Storm bursts into flame in front of his buddies without a second thought in the first issue of the *FF*. As early as the third issue, the members of the Fantastic Four are publicly identified by the Miracle Man during a public performance. Johnny uses his flame powers in public in many of the early adventures, such as the classic incident in *Fantastic Four* #4 where he uses one flaming finger to burn the beard from a supernaturally strong flophouse tramp who turns out to be the Sub-Mariner.

So what the heck is going on over in *Strange Tales*?

Johnny Storm, secretly the Human Torch, lives in the New York suburb of Glenville with his sister Susan Storm who is publicly known to be the Invisible Girl. (And Johnny doesn't think anyone will make the connection.) He wanders around Glenville as Johnny Storm, attending school, getting into mischief and donning his flaming alter ego as needed to foil the Communists, to fight various costumed fiends, to ward off inter-dimensional invaders. He also frets about his secret identity every so often.

YOU MUST HAVE FLIPPED YOUR CORK. YOU CAN'T KEEP ME IN HERE. OPEN UP!
IT'S USELESS TO PROTEST. I AM YOUR MENTAL SUPERIOR AND I'M GOING TO DEFEAT YOU! NOTHING CAN STOP ME. NOTHING!

The first few issues are great escapist fare with art by Jack Kirby and Dick Ayers, plots by Stan Lee, and scripts by Larry Lieber. They have a bit of the flavor of Superboy's Smallville adventures. Despite how improbable and inconsistent it all is... these stories are very entertaining and it's best merely to relax and enjoy them.

Of course, CBMers know that the original Human Torch was an android who first appeared in the very first Marvel comic appropriately titled *Marvel Comics* #1, in 1939. He appeared in almost 300 comic books during the Golden Age, including 38

Human Torch's on-again-off-again secret identity bewilders Marvel collectors and historians to this day

MINUTES LATER...
THIS IS MR ZANTE, JOHNNY! HE'S BEEN WAITING FOR YOU!
IT'S A PLEASURE TO MEET THE FAMOUS HUMAN TORCH!
TORCH!! BUT HOW-? HOW DID YOU KNOW WHO I WAS?
SURELY YOU JEST! EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT JOHNNY STORM AND THE FABULOUS FIRE-BOY ARE ONE AND THE SAME PERSON!
OF COURSE, JOHNNY! ALL GLENVILLE KNOWS OF YOUR DUAL ROLE!
HOLY COW! AND ALL THIS TIME I THOUGHT I WAS HIDING IT SO CLEVERLY! WELL, I'LL BE--

Lieber and other Marvel scribes often scripted Human Torch's dialogue to portray Johnny as a cocky, self-assured, and impulsive teen... a characterization adored by many young Marvelites in the early 1960s

issues of his own magazine (including the three Atlas issues)

In 1961, when Stan Lee and Jack Kirby were creating the *Fantastic Four*, they revived the Human Torch concept in the form of Johnny Storm. The Golden Age Human Torch had not appeared for seven years. The success of the *Fantastic Four* was rapid and impressive. Stan Lee and the Marvel artists quickly tested the market with more super-hero features. The second half of 1962 saw an explosion of super-hero debuts: the Amazing Spider-Man in *Amazing Fantasy* #15; Ant-Man in *Tales To Astonish* #35, Thor in *Journey Into Mystery* #83; and the Human Torch in *Strange Tales* #101.

Strange Tales #101 appeared the same month as *Fantastic Four* #7, indicating the speed with which Marvel prepared the new series. The story in #101 opens with Johnny out-racing an atomic missile. He lands and assumes his street clothes, musing about his secret identity. "This community has become real popular since it became known that the Invisible Girl lives here! But though everyone in town knows my sister Sue is the Invisible Girl, no one knows that I'm the Human Torch!" An elaborate editor's note explains that some of Johnny's friends know he is the Human Torch, " . . but they graduated high school last term! Now one of them is in the army, two are away at college, and the fourth is working in Chicago! All have been sworn to secrecy!"

ALL CHARACTERS, ART & STORIES © 1999 MEG

What is the purpose of this explanation? Johnny had been shown in several issues of *The Fantastic Four* hanging out with other teens who obviously knew his identity. It is possible that this note is a reference to those boys, an attempt to provide consistency in continuity that had been rare in comics before the coming of the modern Marvel Universe (and JLA over at DC). Nothing was ever done with this wrinkle in the Human Torch plot and these friends of Johnny's were never heard of again. (Since they were out of high school before Johnny, one assumes that they were older. However, it is possible that Johnny flunked his senior year and was forced to repeat it. He never seems to have taken his education seriously and his adventures with the Fantastic Four must have taken up much of his study time. The comics never mention his graduation, but he did go to college for a short time so he might have earned a GED.)

After a brief re-telling of the origin of the Fantastic Four, Johnny spends the rest of the issue battling the Destroyer, an olive-clad man of mystery who makes threats against the amusement park that is about to open in Glenville. Eventually, the Destroyer wrecks the roller coaster and the parachute jump while Johnny uses tricks and subterfuges to hid his secret identity and saves the lives of bystanders menaced by the sabotage. (If he's so darn worried about his secret identity, why doesn't he wear a mask?)

At one point, the Thing shows up at the Storm home in Glenville, offering to help, but Johnny wants to resolve this one alone. It turns out that the Destroyer is a Communist spy who had been meeting a Russian submarine on the coast near Glenville. It was a safe meeting place until the amusement park was built after which the submarine was visible from the taller rides!

Those darn Commies!

The Wizard was the closest thing Johnny had to a personal arch foe in those days and he appeared for the first time in *Strange Tales* #102. At first, he is a legitimate celebrity, a genius, an inventor, and an escape artist. He tricks Johnny into visiting his futuristic home and entraps him in an asbestos room. (Johnny cleverly manages to keep his head flamed-on at all times to conceal his face from the Wizard, who doesn't seem to give a darn.) The Wizard has designed a suit that enables him to duplicate Johnny's powers and he flies around Glenville, making mischief. Johnny escapes and, with the help of his invisible sister, defeats the Wizard and proves his own innocence.

In *Strange Tales* #103, Johnny spends most of the adventure in the Fifth Dimension, warding off green skinned aliens who are planning to invade Earth. The secret identity issue is only mentioned in the opening as the Torch flies into a forest to turn into Johnny in private before going to school.

Part of the plot of *ST* #104 was described in the opening of this article. Later, Paste-Pot Pete menaces Glenville and the nearby missile base with his paste gun. He glues Johnny to a missile (evincing absolutely no interest in the Torch's secret identity) and tries to escape with the latest experimental projectile. Johnny escapes and foils the crime but is unable to apprehend the wily Pete.

The Wizard returns for a rematch in *Strange Tales* #105, escaping from prison and barricading himself in his booby-trapped mansion and its many scientific gadgets. Johnny and Sue both get involved in matching wits with him, escaping a death-trap, and handing the Wizard over to the police. The secret identity dilemma is not mentioned a single time. The

BUT IF EVERY-ONE KNEW, WHY DIDN'T THEY SAY ANYTHING?
NO ONE EVER MENTIONED IT TO YOU BECAUSE YOU YOURSELF NEVER SPOKE OF IT! THEY ASSUMED YOU WANTED PRIVACY-- AND THEY RESPECTED YOUR DESIRE!
NOW I'LL LEAVE YOU TWO ALONE FOR YOUR MAN TALK!

Wizard isn't even remotely interested in the identity of his foe.

Why was the secret identity scenario not used in this issue? Did writers Stan Lee and Larry Lieber forget about it? Maybe it just didn't fit into the story Or did somebody notice that the Torch's secret identity was not consistent with the portrayals in the *Fantastic Four*?

You have to give the writers credit for their next move· they could have merely ignored the secret identity issues and gone on with the series as if they had never happened. The comic books at the time were filled with inconsistencies like that and no one seemed to bother about it very much. However, *Strange Tales* #106 addresses the problem head on… and produces a very clever resolution.

A man rings the doorbell of the Glenville home of the Storms and is met by Sue. He introduces himself as Carl Zante and asks to speak to the Human Torch and Sue doesn't bat an eye. She explains that she is expecting him soon and asks her guest if he'd like to wait.

Johnny lands in a nearby alley and changes into his civilian clothes. "Boy! The pains I take to keep my identity a secret!" A couple of local boys see him and stay out of sight, casually discussing his comings and goings Johnny walks away, musing, "If anyone in town ever discovered that I was the Human Torch, I'd never have a minute's privacy!"

When he arrives at home, he is surprised to find out that Zante knows who he is. "Everybody knows that Johnny Storm and the fabulous fire-boy are one and the same person!" says Zante. Sue adds, "All Glenville knows of your dual role!"

"Holy Cow!" blurts Johnny, scratching his tousled, yellow head, "and all this time I thought I was hiding it so cleverly!"

Sue explains that the people of Glenville had respected Johnny's wish for privacy. The whole Human Torch secret identity scheme had been (apparently) a farce from the start, little more than an adolescent game of Johnny's!

(Carl Zante turns out to be a crooked acrobat who persuades Johnny to leave the Fantastic Four and join him. But Johnny is only quitting the FF to play along with Zante and find out what his racket is.)

Thus, the case of the Human Torch's secret identity is logically brought to an end. But why did the writers pin a secret identity on Johnny in the first place? (I asked Dick Ayers about this phenomenon at the San Diego convention in 1997 and he didn't remember that the Torch's identity had ever been a secret!)

For as long as I can remember, I've thought that Stan Lee must have really liked the idea of a series with a teenage superhero who had the extra problem of coping with an alter ego. This theme was fully explored in *Amazing Spider-Man* over the following years. As a matter of fact, the cover dates of *Strange Tales* #101-106 (October 1962 to March 1963) fit very nicely between *Amazing Fantasy* #15 (August 1962) and *Amazing Spider Man* #1 (March 1963).

Is this a coincidence? Or is there a long-forgotten connection? Did Stan Lee or Larry Lieber want to experiment with stories about a teenage superhero with a secret identity, starting with the Human Torch and later shifting the scenario to the Spider-Man series when the first issue came out? Or was it deliberate, testing the idea in *Strange Tales*, measuring reader reaction in the Torch series before risking failure in a whole new magazine devoted to a new character? (Remember, the other Marvel title devoted to a single character, *The Incredible Hulk* (who also had a secret identity), was not doing very well The sixth and final issue of the first run of the Hulk would be cover-dated March 1963)

In his first encounter with Carl Zante, "the world's greatest acrobat," (see bottom of page 33 and left from Strange Tales #106, Mar 1963) Johnny Storm again confused by public knowledge of his alter ego… the Human Torch!

So many questions and so few answers!

Following #106, The Torch went on to headline other memorable issues of *Strange Tales* .. especially the next four. In *ST* #107, he battles the Sub Mariner… on the cover of #108 the FF emerges from an evil artist's canvas; #109 features a compelling "Kirby monsters" style cover, and of course #110 showcases the debut of Lee & Ditko's amazing and historic Silver Age hero, Dr. Strange.

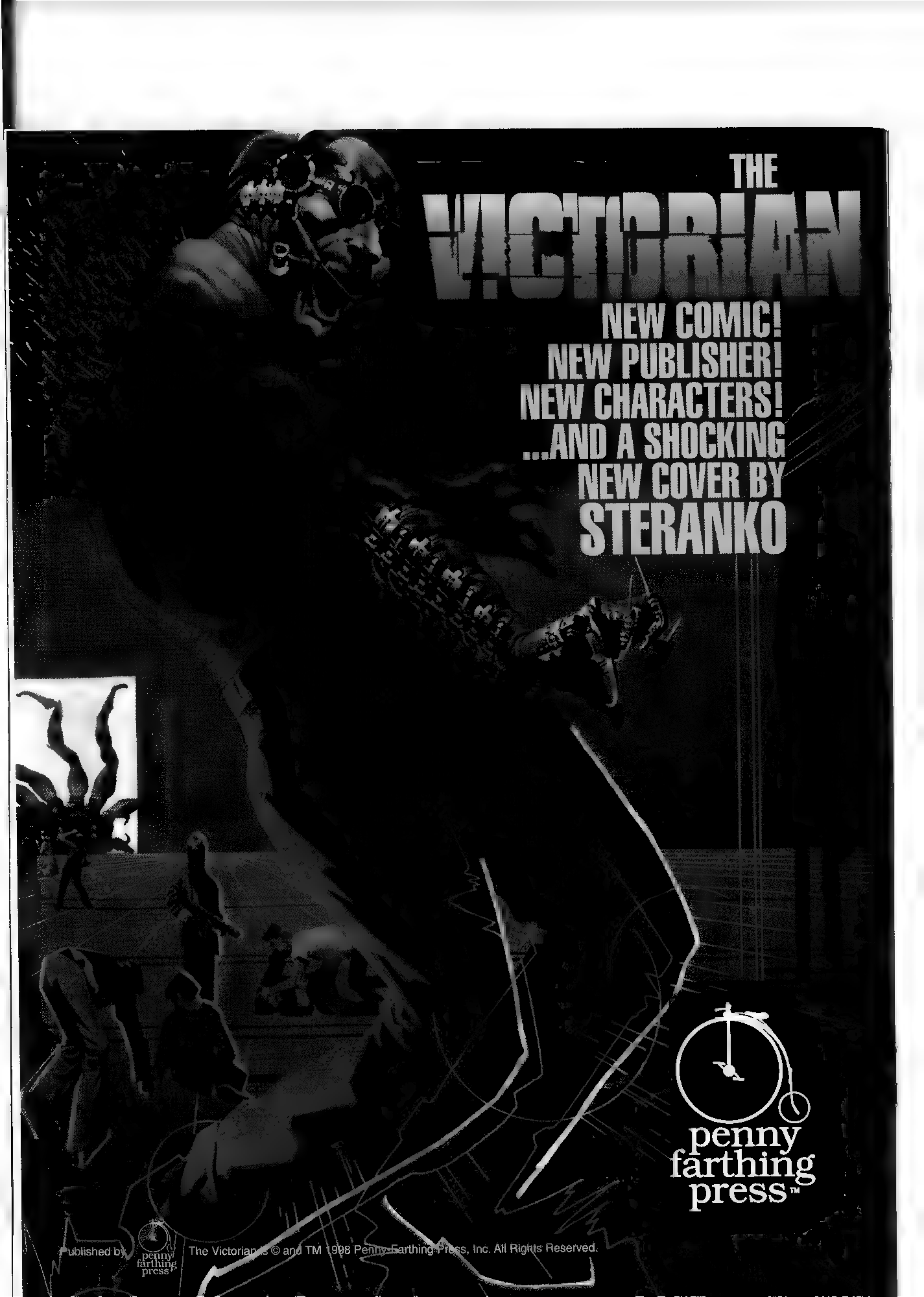
IF ONLY YOU WOULD HELP US...
THAT'S JUST WHAT I INTEND TO DO! ZEMU AND HIS BUDDIES ARE GOING TO RUE THE DAY THEY TANGLED WITH THE HUMAN TORCH!

Rescued by Kirby-rendered beauty, Valeria, the Human Torch makes ready to battle Zemu, Prime Minister and "Sneering Despot" of the 5th Dimension in Strange Tales #103 (Dec 1962, script by Larry Lieber)

But the question of the Torch's secret identity, the timing of the cancellation of *Amazing Fantasy*, the cancellation of the *Hulk*, the new *Spider-Man* comic… all these early events on the *Strange Tales* timeline pose many unanswered questions. Was it just a period of experimentation on the part of the Marvel editorial staff… or were they inter-related, and part of some master plan?

Perhaps as time goes by, a few informed questions sprinkled among the participants may open the floodgates of memory that will allow fandom to finally answer these tantalizing loose ends… or we may never know for sure. In any case, the early episodes of the Human Torch in *Strange Tales* continue to be both very collectible… and historically noteworthy.

Excelsior!


THE
VICTORIAN
NEW COMIC!
NEW PUBLISHER!
NEW CHARACTERS!
...AND A SHOCKING
NEW COVER BY
STERANKO
penny
farthing
press™
Published by
penny
farthing
press™
The Victorians © and TM 1998 Penny-Farthing Press, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

© 1999 MEG

Man in the Iron Mask

A tribute to ol' Shellhead!

By J.C. Vaughn

The Man

What was it with Stan Lee and those old "—head" nicknames all the heroes were tagged with? Daredevil? Horn-head. Spidey? Web head. Captain America? Wing-head. The Watcher? Well, um, never mind about The Watcher, but the "—head" nicknames had a way of sticking.

Iron Man, of course, was "Shell head." And why not?

Perhaps more than any other Marvel character except Captain America, millionaire Tony Stark (these days it would be billionaire Tony Stark) was defined by his alter ego.

The Iron Man persona—the break-through technology and the power that came with it—were derived from Stark's intellect and abilities, but it was the suit of armor and his exploits in it that gave him his name and in turn established his real character.

Faced with the usual superhero dilemmas of impossible situations and no-way-out scenarios, it was just as often Stark's intellect as his mechanized muscles which solved the situation, but no one ever ran up to him and said "Hey, great brain!" The other characters in the Marvel Universe and the readership by and large looked at the exploits of the suit.

Like the generations-long delineation and evolution of the roles of DC's Batman and Bruce Wayne, the development of Tony Stark and Iron Man ran as almost opposites. Like Wayne, Stark allowed himself to be perceived as something of a physical lightweight when danger loomed on the horizon. Though he didn't play the fop to the extent Wayne did—Stark tried to have relationships and was perceived as having an active hand in his businesses—he did play the role of social butterfly.

Iron Man was, of course, all business. He generally "took his boss to safety" and then attacked the bad guys with muscle and smarts. Within the framework of the Marvel Universe, Iron Man had his own level of fame that frequently eclipsed Stark's. He was active in the *Avengers* from the first issue. While Stark's role as financial backer and all-around provider for the team is frequently forgotten, the same cannot be said for Iron Man's presence as one of the team's most powerful members.

It's this dichotomy of roles which supports Jim Shooter's theory that Iron Man is the most important link in the Avengers team. "Captain America is most people's choice because he's the tactical leader," he said, "but leader-

ship moving behind the scenes can be far more difficult. He doesn't press this role with the other characters even when perhaps he should."

Sub-Mariner #72
see sidebar below

The Armor

The evolution of the armor mirrored (and preceded) real-world advances in technology. The first armor, seen in *Tales of Suspense* #39, was clunky, but it was supposedly put together out of spare parts. The second version, pretty much the same suit painted gold, was also bulky, but at least it looked less like an Atlas horror comic robot. He was in this armor for *The Avengers* #1.

The real revolution came a few months later in *Tales of Suspense* #48 with the debut of the first of the now-familiar red and gold armors. This suit was more streamlined and much less robot-like. The redesigning process became an important part of Iron Man storylines from this point forward. It wasn't enough that Stark had created the Iron Man armor. He had to keep Shield head current!

A popular but short-lived version of this was the point-tipped faceplate seen on *The Avengers* #4 (circa *Tales of Suspense* #50) and a few other books. Its lasting impact, though, has proven greater than expected. The recent Alex Ross-designed, Sean Chen-illustrated re-launch of Iron Man clearly took its inspiration from this version.

By *Tales of Suspense* #66, what most Silver Age and Bronze Age fans would think of as the classic Iron Man armor came into being. Whether it was Gene Colan's evocative pencil work or that of another artist, this was the suit which simply projected power.

The evolution of the suit continues to this day and has included a number of popular concepts such as the faceplate with the rivets, the Guardsman armor (when Tony tried to retire), the mission-based "Space Armor," the jet black "Stealth Armor," the bubble-topped "Deep Sea Armor," and the "War Machine Armor" which eventually lead to an entirely new, spin-off character. Some of the suits have been different colors, but the red and gold paint scheme keeps coming back.

(Continued on page 48)

The Amazing Aqua-Mariner

by Mike Wilbur

When is a Sub-Mariner story NOT a Sub-Mariner story? Probably when the book has been canceled, the creative team has wrapped up ongoing continuity and moved onto other projects, and you suddenly discover you have more issues scheduled for the press time, and it absolutely, positively has to be there "overnight."

Regular readers of Marvel's Silver Age *Sub-Mariner* found ourselves perplexed by the incongruity of issue #72, cover-dated September 1974. Writer Marv Wolfman had neatly tied up all the dangling subplots and put a wrap on things with #71, and, yet, here was another issue. And what an issue!

But who was this brooding, ecologically obsessed impostor wearing Namor's costume in #72?

In the issue, we observe some muscle-bound jerk say to his buddy (prior to committing what is now referred to as a "Hate crime" against the contemplative Namor), "I'm telling you that's Aqua-Mariner or Submarine-Man or something like that over there."

Meanwhile in the story, a very un-Marvel-like sludge creature has been gestating at the bottom of the bay. It's a space-faring alien, trapped amid the debris of a detonated satellite, who has previously dropped to earth and settled to the bottom. The alien observes the surrounding sea life and decides to build itself a body "...from the slime on the bottom of the bay..."

The narration continues, "For two years this being works upon its humanoid husk... until at last the body is complete." But we readers thought, "Why a humanoid body after it had observed nothing more than swimming fish?" The answer was anybody's guess.

Comic book synchronicity being what it is, the creature rises from the bottom and heads toward land just in time to get entangled in the battle between Namor and the previously mentioned muscle-bound jerk. Still enraged after the battle, Namor also lashes out at the alien who, in response, somehow blinds Namor (with whatever other-worldly power it possesses). Yet the Sub-Mariner battles on until the alien, unaccustomed to physical pain, quits its tediously crafted body and launches itself back toward space.

Now, Namor considers his plight. "If only I had tried to understand the creature...." Sensing Namor's remorse, the departing alien restores his sight. "I have learned a lesson this day... " the Sub-Mariner muses, as he swims off.

"Huh? What? Who?" we all asked in astonishment back in the summer of '74. "What kind of Marvel story was this?" we wondered. Had we been readers of the latter issues of DC's Silver Age *Aquaman* series, we would have had our answer.

It turns out that the writer of this final/fill-in issue of *Sub-Mariner* was non other than the erstwhile Steve Skeates. . Aquaman scripter! Hired because of his expertise writing underwater adventures, Skeates adapted a "leftover" Aquaman script still on the shelf after the cancellation of the DC title three years before Namor's last-minute publication gap.

Amazingly, *Sub-Mariner* #72 goes down in comic book history for two reasons. It contained both the last Silver Age Namor issue... AND Steve Skeates last Silver Age "Aquaman" story!

Marvel's Weirdest One-Shot?

By J.C. Vaughn

It was the end of one era and the beginning of another. Marvel's two great double-feature titles, *Tales to Astonish* and *Tales of Suspense*, were coming to an end. The original Silver Age homes of the Hulk and Sub-Mariner, and Iron Man and Captain America, respectively, were slated to evolve into two new titles.

Both of the transformed titles had at one time been the pre-hero Marvel monster-flying saucer types of titles tracing their roots to 1959 and the Atlas days.

Iron Man had been a fixture in *Tales of Suspense* since his first appearance in issue #39. The Golden Avenger waged his fight against the forces of A.I.M., the Maggia, and others over the next 60 issues. His feature was joined in *Tales of Suspense #59* by Captain America, who had resurfaced in *The Avengers #4* (and who had battled Iron Man in the previous issue). It was Captain America, though, whose title would secede *Tales of Suspense*, leaving Iron Man without a home.

The Incredible Hulk and Namor features were originally paired in *Tales to Astonish #70,* the Hulk having begun his stay in the title with *#59* (the pages of *Tales to Astonish* had previously been a home to scientist Hank Pym in his guises of Ant-Man and Giant-Man). When the time for the change came, it was the Hulk who got to keep the numbering.

Tales of Suspense #99 and *Tales to Astonish* #101 were the last issues of those two series. They were succeeded by *Captain America* #100 and *The Incredible Hulk* #102, respectively, but Marvel already had plans not to leave Iron Man or Sub-Mariner out in the cold.

But they didn't want to or couldn't launch four new titles in one month. So Sub-Mariner from *Tales to Astonish* and Iron Man from *Tales of Suspense* landed in a "Special Once-In-A-Lifetime Issue" (or so says the cover) *Iron Man & Sub-Mariner* #1. It carried the regular 12¢ price tag and looked like a traditional comic. Except, of course, it wasn't. It was a one shot. The very next month, both *Iron Man* #1 and *Sub-Mariner* #1 would debut.

CHRONOLOGY

Tales of Suspense #99	March 1968
Tales to Astonish #101	March 1968
Captain America #100	April 1968
Incredible Hulk #102	April 1968
Iron Man & Sub-Mariner #1	April 1968
Iron Man #1	May 1968
Sub-Mariner #1	May 1968

It might seem strange considering the popularity of the two characters, but collectors did not immediately flock to the title. *Iron Man & Sub-Mariner #1* was a neat gimmick, but for decades it was as if no one knew what to do with it. It was one of those ubiquitous titles that seemed to come in quantity with every comic shop starter kit. If a new store opened, they had at least four of them (even 40 or 400).

The *Iron Man* series lasted 332 issues and was succeeded by a new one and *Sub-Mariner* (Namor's second series, following the Golden Age series) lasted a shorter 72 issues (but the character moving into the ranks of the Defenders). Neither character disappeared for any length of time, nor was there any lack of guest appearances by them in other titles.

Presently listed at $100 in NM (and probably a great buy at that price), the book is still plentiful in lower grades. Like many titles that previously seemed abundant for a long period, slowly collectors have begun to realize that numerous late Silver Age and early Bronze Age titles are not as readily available in higher grades anymore. *Iron Man & Sub-Mariner #1* has slowly, quietly crept into this category.

TALES OF SUSPENSE
WHO? OR WHAT, IS THE NEWEST, MOST BREATH-TAKING, MOST SENSATIONAL SUPER-HERO OF ALL....?
"IRON MAN!"
HE LIVES! HE WALKS! HE CONQUERS!

TALES OF SUSPENSE
FEATURING AMERICA'S NEWEST SUPER-HERO SENSATION...
"IRON MAN!"
HIS SIZE ALONE DOES NOT WORRY ME! BUT THERE IS SOMETHING ELSE, SOME SINISTER SECRET BEHIND THE COMING OF GARGANTUS!

TALES OF SUSPENSE
MORE POWERFUL THAN IRON MAN! HOW CAN THE GOLDEN SUPER-HERO EVER REPEAT
"THE CRIMSON DYNAMO!"
IT'S TIME FOR ANTHONY STARK TO BECOME IRON MAN ONCE AGAIN!! I PRAY THIS WILL NOT BE MY FINAL BATTLE

TRIBUTE TO IRON MAN

Continued from page 46

Evolution of Iron Man's Armor in *Tales of Suspense*

Gray Armor	#39
Golden Armor	#40
First Red & Gold Armor	#48
Pointed Face Plate	#50
"Classic" Armor	#66

The Villain

What can you say about a character when two of the first villains later turn out to be two of the most popular Avengers? In *Tales of Suspense* #57, Iron Man is confronted by Hawkeye, who in turn is a pawn of the evil femme fatale, the Black Widow (she first appeared five issues earlier). Hawkeye, pretty much a dupe, and Black Widow, a Soviet agent, are foiled. The characters, of course, proved to be fairly popular.

There was no such change of heart for The Mandarin, probably the most enduring of Iron Man's bad guys. First appearing *Tales of Suspense* #50, he continues to move both behind the scenes and center stage in Shell-head's life.

Crimson Dynamo (first appeared in *TOS* #46), Titanium Man (*TOS* #69-70), Whiplash (*TOS* #97), Firebrand (*Iron Man* #27) and Spymaster (*Iron Man* #33), all would return time and again to plague Iron Man. Crimson Dynamo and Titanium Man were Soviet agents (an early recurring theme was the theft of technology). Whiplash (who later became Blacklash) was a criminal for hire working for The Maggia. Firebrand was what we now might call an eco-terrorist. Spymaster's bag was industrial espionage. Of these, only Firebrand and Whiplash weren't replaced by others playing the same "roles." There have been, at last count, at least three Titanium Men.

And though over the years there have been numerous fill-ins who wore the armor, there's only going to be one Iron Man.

J.C. Vaughn is the Timonium, Maryland-based Executive Editor of Gemstone Publishing. In addition to CBM, he has contributed articles to The Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide, Hake's Price Guide to Character Toy Premiums, and other publications.

TALES OF SUSPENSE
SEE THE NEW IRON MAN!
IRON MAN IS DEFEATED!! NOW, NONE CAN CHALLENGE THE GREAT MISTER DOLL!
THIS ONE YOU DARE NOT MISS!

LEFT TOP TO BOTTOM: **TOS #39, 40, and 46**
RIGHT TOP TO BOTTOM: **TOS #48, 50, and 66**

Carving Up Superman

IT'S A SUPER-CUSTODY BATTLE!

BY MATT BRADY

Look up in the sky! It's a bird, it's a plane, it's a Copyright Custody Battle! For more than 60 years, Superman could not be stopped, not even by Kryptonite. But now the last son of Krypton, an orphan rocketed to Earth, is torn between the family of one of his creators and publisher DC Comics in a super-battle over his copyright.

DC Comics stands to lose half the rights to Superman due to documents filed in the U.S. Copyright Office by heirs of the late Superman creator Jerry Siegel. His wife, Joanne (the first model for Lois Lane) and daughter, Laura Siegel Larson, revoked the transfer of copyright Siegel and his co-creator, the late Joe Shuster, granted DC Comics in 1938. The price back then: a mere $130. Under the law, Siegel's heirs have been entitled to half of the revenue from Superman starting April 16, 1999, says Michael Lovitz, an attorney with Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld, specializing in copyright law, who has been following the case for some time.

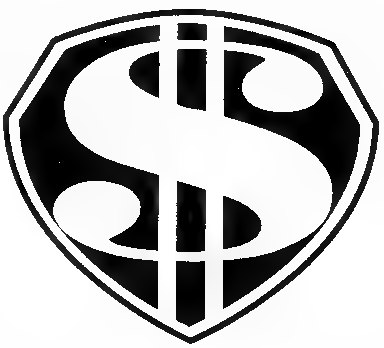
Further, the termination means that DC Comics no longer holds the exclusive rights to produce Superman comics and related merchandise. This means that the Siegels could create their own Superman comic book or even television series or movie to compete with DC's publications and series, as the Siegels and DC now co-own the Superman copyright. However, if the Siegels were to produce their own Superman comic book or movie, they would have to pay DC Comics one-half of the revenue it generated as well.

Merchandising Superman has been extremely lucrative over the years. The image of the Man of Steel has appeared on everything from pajamas to American Express ads. Toys, movies, animated and live action TV series' all have borne Superman's likeness.

Superman has emerged from his humble roots based in the science fiction imaginings and scratchbooks of two young boys in Cleveland, Ohio (writer Jerry Siegel and artist Joe Shuster) to become a multi-billion dollar pop icon, perhaps the most successfully marketed fictional character.

History Of An Icon

Superman was created by Siegel and Shuster in the early '30s and went through a number of incarnations before the two finally sold the character to DC Comics (then Detective Comics) in 1938 for a reported $130, which included the copyright and a contract to supply DC with future Superman stories. Siegel and Shuster made a good living as comic creators in the early '40s, but were increasingly convinced that DC owed them more money, as the publisher had fully exploited the character and spinoffs such as Superboy and Starman, and was making millions on Superman comics and other merchandise.



Siegel and Shuster sued DC in 1948 over issues related to Superboy, and DC settled with the creators for a reported $120,000 apiece, less than two years' salary for the two at the time. The case cost Siegel and Shuster their contracts with DC as well as the creator credit in Superman comic books where it had appeared since 1938.

In the ensuing years, Siegel and Shuster continued to try to get a larger piece of the millions of dollars' worth of profits Superman was generating for DC, but both fell upon hard times. Shuster, suffering from vision problems, was reduced to working as a messenger boy in New York City.

Shuster was so down on his luck that a comics industry tale has it that he once delivered a message to the office of DC Comics, where he was recognized and asked up to the then president's office. The legend goes that Shuster was thinking he was finally going to be recognized and welcomed back, but was stunned when the then-president of DC Comics told him that he never wanted to see Shuster in the offices again. Although it's probably just an outrageous embellishment, the tale illustrates the precipitous fall of Shuster's fortune.

Siegel's fortunes were similar. DC gave Siegel a nominal amount of work in the late '50s, but dismissed him when he reportedly made comments about wanting to be better treated. Later, Joanne traveled to DC's offices and asked the then-publisher if he wanted to read the headline 'Creator of Superman Starves to Death' in the New York papers, according to comics historian Mark Evanier, who related the story in Siegel's 1996 obituary.

While Siegel continued to fight for a piece of the Superman fortune, he tried to get media attention in support of his cause, going so far as to send out 400 press releases in 1975 to major media outlets, according to Philip Yeh, founder of *Cartoonists Across America & The World*, who interviewed Siegel at the time. "No one in the media knew who he was. I figured he would have about a hundred interviews lined up, but he told me I was the only one who responded and interviewed him. He had ceased to exist among the comic book community, and that's a shame on the entire industry."

It wasn't until 1978, thanks to the efforts of Neal Adams and other prominent comic creators

as well as pressure from DC's new corporate parent Warner Brothers, that the publisher relented, giving both creators a yearly stipend which began at $20,000 and increased with time until their deaths. "They got some money toward the end of their lives," Yeh says. "But it wasn't anything like they would've seen if they would've been given credit for creating Superman and paid all along in a situation such as Charles Schultz or the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles' creators, Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird who have all become multi millionaires thanks to their creations."

With Shuster's death in 1992 and Siegel's death in 1996, it seemed that the legal battles over the ownership and control of the Last Son of Krypton were over.

But that may be changing.

AnotherUniverse.com obtained documents filed with the Copyright Office in Washington, D.C. on April 3, 1997. In them, Siegel's wife, Joanne, and daughter, Laura Siegel Larson, terminated the transfer of renewal copyright "to the extent of author Jerome Siegel's share in the ownership of the renewal of the copyrights made in a certain agreement between Jerome Siegel and Joe Shuster and Detective Comics, Inc. [DC] executed on or about December 4, 1937 [The date Siegel and Shuster began work for DC Comics—Superman wasn't officially a DC Copyright until April 18, 1938 when the first issue of *Action Comics* was published]."

What this means in plain English is this. The Copyright Act of the United States recognizes that over their lifetimes and the years after their deaths, creators and their heirs have different bargaining positions.

"When the Copyright Act was changed over the last 20-some years to put the U.S. in line with the European and world copyright community, part of that alignment included an extension of the terms of protection for the copyright," says Lovitz.

"Originally, the copyright term was 56 years—28 which was granted automatically, renewable for a second 28-year period. In the late '70s, the term of copyright protection was extended to put us in line with the Berne Convention, which increased the term to the lifetime of the creator plus 50 years, which came into play in '78," Lovitz said.

The Berne Convention, an international copyright treaty that has been adopted by more than 70 countries in Europe and around the world, has been in effect for more than 100 years. It is designed to protect authors' and creators' rights as well as their works.

"Recently, the Sonny Bono Amendment added another 20 years making copyright length life plus 70 years, to put us again in line with the Berne Convention and the European Community," said Lovitz. "Each time there is an extension of the term of copyright protection; the Copyright Act provides the original authors or their heirs the opportunity to profit from their works during these extensions. If there were grants of rights by those authors, those rights need to be 'taken back' by the author first. The right of reversion section of the Copyright Act gives authors the ability to do just that."

In recognition of the weak bargaining positions authors have early in their careers, the Copyright Act provides for a termination of any grant of transfer of copyright. For grants of transfer of copyright made prior to Jan. 1, 1978, termination may be effected at any time during a 5-year period which begins at the end of the 56 years from the date the copyright was originally secured. In the case of Superman, that period began in 1994 (1938 + 56 years). Also according to the statute, parties have to give a 2-year notice of the termination, which is why the papers were filed in 1997 with the Copyright Office.

"Superman" was originally developed and created by Joe Shuster and Jerry Siegel and then brought to DC, "Lovitz says. "All rights were assigned over to DC, and there was subsequent litigation that confirmed the assignment with some additional nuances. Now that there's a term extension which changes the Copyright Act, the author, or in this case, the author's heirs have terminated that transfer so that the Siegel half of the rights to Superman are being taken back by the Siegel family."

The Superman Family

According to the documents filed with the Copyright Office, the termination of transfer applies not only to Superman himself, but to: "each and every work (in any medium whatsoever, whenever created) that includes or embodies any character, story element, or indicia reasonably associated with Superman or the Superman stories, such as, without limitation, Superman, Clark Kent, Lois Lane, Perry White, Jimmy Olsen, Superboy, Supergirl, Lana Lang, Lex Luthor, Mr. Mxyzptlk, Ma and Pa Kent, Steel, the planet Krypton, Kryptonite, Metropolis, Smallville, or the Daily Planet."

The documents then go on to list every Superman related work ever created, from unpublished Superman stories written by Siegel in 1933 to *Action Comics* #1 through #734 to *Superman: The Movie* and *Superman: The Animated Series* as well as soundtracks, clothing and other Superman styled merchandise. Even R.E.M.' song with the line "I am Superman," which was recently used by Lotus in an ad campaign and the Spin Doctors' "Pocketful of Kryptonite" are included.

As you can imagine, the documents themselves, three in total, one for each of the agreements between Siegel, Shuster and DC (1938, 1948 and 1978) are massive, each coming in at more than 500 pages.

As for the tricky question about the copyright on Superman material and products created between 1938 and April 16, 1999, DC still owns the copyright on the materials produced, but since they are derivative materials of the original work and constitute an exploitation of the original work, any future revenues made from those works (*Action Comics Archives, The Dominus Effect* trade paperback, etc.) would need to be split with the Siegels.

Further, DC and Time Warner must share revenues from other Superman projects with the Siegel's 50/50. This fact may have very well had a chilling effect on the Tim Burton/Nicolas Cage Superman movie that was never produced but was supposed to have been released in 2000, as well as future deals for Superman licensed products from DC and Time Warner. However, if the Siegels wish to produce a lithograph or sculpture, they would be completely within their rights to do so, according to Lovitz, and would need no permission from DC or Time Warner. However, the 50/50 ownership would require the Siegels to share revenues with DC.

An absolute worst-case scenario for DC would occur if the Siegels chose to license other creators to produce a comic book and other merchandise based on Superman and the related characters that would compete with the products produced by DC.

Something important to remember regarding the issue is that the termination of transfer of copyright does not and should not go to trial in order to take effect. The Copyright Office processed the reversion and it became effective

April of this year, flowing automatically from the provisions laid out by the copyright statute.

As for where the matter currently stands, neither side was willing to comment on the matter as of Tuesday, August 31, suggesting that negotiations between the parties are ongoing, and may have been ongoing since the documents were filed in 1997.

"The notices of termination were valid and effective," says Arthur Levine, counsel for Joanne Siegel and Laura Siegel Larson. "Certain legal consequences flow from there, and that's all I can say about the matter" When reached for comment, DC Publisher Paul Levitz said only, "We have a long and happy and complex relationship with the Siegel family."

Ideally, DC would like that long and happy relationship to continue. But judging from both sides' silence, unless both parties signed a gag order regarding the arrangement, it can be safely assumed that the Siegels and DC are still in negotiations, (and may well have been in negotiations since the papers were filed in 1997) over the matter and are trying to reach a compromise.

"The Siegels filed the appropriate documents with the Copyright Office and served notice on all of the parties that might be affected by this reversion and termination of rights," Lovitz says "They're obligated to give advance warning, which the filing did. Unless something is done in terms of a lawsuit to try and stop this, it's just a matter of the termination occurring on the date that was noticed, specifically, April 16, 1999 so as of that date, there is an obligation for DC to share in the revenue generated by Superman with the Siegels."

For DC Comics, the best-case scenario is that the Siegels are willing to reach a compromise for a yearly or one-time settlement that would be considered a perpetual license for the use of Superman in comics or on licensed merchandise

On the other hand, if no compromise can be reached, DC could find itself in a medium-case scenario, forking over 50% of every dollar they make on anything having to do with Superman worldwide for the remainder of the copyright term which extends until 2033.

(As an aside, 2033 will bring a whole new set of headaches for DC and Time Warner which will make this look like a gnat—that year, the copyright on Superman expires, and under current law, cannot be renewed. *Action Comics* #1 goes into the public domain, and anyone can create derivative works based on it, but would have limited rights to use the "Superman" name and all related trademarks, as DC will presumably still own the trademark on the name and all other related trademarks.)

Despite the ramifications of the Siegel's termination of copyright, Lovitz doesn't believe this will open the floodgates for Golden and Silver Age creators trying to regain the copyrights of characters they created, but it will probably have a few creators dusting off decades-old contracts

While this means legal wrangling for Superman, it doesn't mean that you'll soon see Stan Lee doing the same thing. Along with Jack Kirby, Lee created Spider-Man, the Fantastic Four and the rest of the Marvel Universe under a work-for-hire contract. By the letter of the law, the company hiring the writer under such a contract is considered the sole author of the work and therefore, the copyright to any character is in the company's name.

Superman is different.

"It is a possibility that you could have anyone in the Silver Age or Golden Age coming back and challenging ownership in the copyright," Lovitz says. "Take Martin Nodell for example—if he created Green Lantern and then brought it to DC, he'd be in a similar situation concerning the original Green Lantern and all work that has come from it.

However, if Nodell was working for DC at the time, and as part of his employment and daily work ritual was to come up with a variety of new characters, one of which just happened to be Green Lantern, then under the work-for-hire doctrine, he would not have individual ownership, rather, the company would've had initial ownership in the copyright."

As for the man with the S, what will the future hold? Only time and a cadre of lawyers can say for sure. It may be that Superman's biggest concern all along hasn't been Kryptonite, but rather the Copyright Act itself, which may have the power to bring the Man of Steel down.

"It would be nice to see something turn out well for Jerry Siegel, even now after his death," Yeh says "Both his and Joe's memories deserve far better than what they're getting."

Matt Brady is a contributing editor to AnotherUniverse.com. You can reach him when you visit their website at www.anotheruniverse.com.

PRE-HERO MARVEL

Continued from page 27

this back in 1951, when the gorilla-covered *Strange Adventures* #8 shot up in sales. But Lee had no clear idea. Only that somewhere in that issue lay the secret.

(Strangely, Lee never caught on to DC's other big cover secret. Dinosaur covers also inflated sales. Through all the pre-hero era, only one dinosaur cover was used by Marvel.)

Beginning with the issues cover-dated 1960, Lee began to tinker with the Big Four's rather flexible format. The seventh issue of *Tales to Astonish* cover featured another Steve Ditko tale, "I Spent Midnight with the Thing from Bald Mountain." The Kirby-Ditko cover showed a smock-clad sculptor assembling a giant out of stone blocks. It was basically Frankenstein retold. Lightning strikes the statue and it comes to life. A sequel, "It Lives Again," appeared in the next issue, making this the first returning Marvel monster.

JIM #56 showcased Don Heck's Zog, about an giant alien discovered locked in ice. *Strange Tales* #73 had "Grottu, King of Insects" by Kirby, while once again Heck had the lead story in *JIM* #57, "Orogo, the Thing from Beyond," about a giant robot from outer space. Heck's cover splash must have been weak, because the printed splash was by Kirby, as was the cover. Next issue, Kirby had to furnish another splash for Heck's "I Found Rro." Perhaps it was here that Lee began to understand that nobody drew giant monsters like Jack Kirby. Yet *Tales to Astonish* #8's "Mummex King of Mummies" was once again a Heck effort.

If further proof that Lee was attempting to duplicate the success of the Monstro issue of *JIM* is needed, it can be found in *Tales of Suspense* #8, whose Kirby cover story depicted "Monstro...the Menace from the Murky Depths." This Monstro was an unmemorable brownish-orange monster octopus. Over years, seeking higher sales, Lee would coin variations on the name like Monstrom, Monsteroso, Monstrollo and others.

The Big Brown Monster craze was now officially in full cry.

When you analyze them, Big Brown Monsters fell into four simple categories: Mutated Monsters like Grottu, Created Creatures like the Thing from Bald Mountain; Revived Rampagers like Mummex, and Alien Attackers like Orogo. From these basic building blocks would be created the fantastic host that will keep Marvel viable until the coming of the Fantastic Four.

A major contribution to the popularity of Big Brown Monster was their varied treatment. Sometimes, the creature was a monosyllabic engine of destruction. Others times he looked down upon us "puny humans" and "mere mortals" like we were the bugs. Sometimes we were. More than once, a lumbering brute of an alien emerged from a UFO into US tank fire. Only after being beaten off by a howling humanity, was it revealed that the creature had come in peace. Ignorant mankind was the real monster.

Lieber recalls the actual naming of the Big Brown Monsters was not his job. "Those aren't real words. Those Stan made up." Lee remembers, "They were fun to do. I loved making up those crazy names."

Kirby's exact role is hard to define. He liked to remind fans that his ancestors came from Transylvania and family folktales infused his creepier work. But Kirby too had a hand in their co-creation. On the back of the surviving art to 'Goom, the Thing from Planet X" are variant names like Hoogg and Horgg—all in Kirby's distinctive lettering style.

But the BBM wasn't the only innovation. For a brief time, unremembered by pre-Marvel historians to this day, Lee was salting his books with continued characters! Kirby's "I am the Genie" and "Return of the Genie" appeared in *Tales to Astonish* #8 and #9. Heck's renegade robot premiered in *Tales of Suspense* #8, returning the next issue. "When the Totem Walks" — about a sentient Indian totem pole—was Ditko's contribution to Lee's new direction. He clumped through *Strange Tales* #74 and #75. Kirby's "The Martian Who Stole

my Body" ran in *JIM* #57 and #58.

This was a short-lived innovation It ended and began with *Strange Tales* #75, perhaps the key pre-hero Marvel. It featured Ditko's "Return of the Totem" and another Don Heck renegade robot tale called "I Made the Hulk Live," chronologically the second pre hero use of the name, Hulk. (The first was "The Iron Hulk" in *World of Fantasy* #19, August, 1959.)

But the lead story, "Taboo! The Thing from the Murky Swamp!" another Leiber Kirby fantasy 7-pager, represented a new milestone. The first Big Brown Monster to return by popular demand, Taboo was a typical specimen of what was to come. A large lump of living mud, he was discovered in the Amazonian swamp, where his spaceship crashed. Taboo tricks humankind into giving him all earthly knowledge, so he can return home. In reality, Taboo wants to conquer earth But an H bomb blows him up before he can execute his plan of conquest.

"And so ended the threat of Taboo!" Lee wrote at the bottom of the final panel. "Or so we thought! Yes... SO WE THOUGHT!!"

"The Return of Taboo" happened two issues later, and it opened the floodgates. Lee had by this time decreed that Jack Kirby would draw all the lead monster yarns. Kirby had already slipped into the role of exclusive cover artist. The King was on his throne, and Big Brown Monsters were his subjects.

"I always enjoyed doing monster books," Kirby explained. "Monster books gave me the opportunity to draw things out of the ordinary. Monster books were a challenge—what kind of monster would fascinate people? I couldn't draw anything that was too outlandish or too horrible. I never did that. What I did was draw something intriguing. There was something about the monster that you could live with. If you saw him you wouldn't faint dead away There was nothing disgusting in his demeanor. There was nothing about him that repelled you. My monsters were lovable monsters."

In these early days of the Comics Code, with vampires and werewolves banned in comics, Kirby's concerns were critical, and they help explain the enduring appeal of his creature creations to this day

Ditko's more psychologically realistic art seemingly ran afoul of the Comics Code Authority from time to time, if the redrawn ending of one story, "Masquerade Party" (*Strange Tales* #83) is any evidence. It was probably sent back for revisions by the Code because it depicted the Devil—a taboo subject. Another artist—possibly Al Hartley—redrew the last panel, giving the horrific ending a lighter spin Publisher Martin Goodman read Ditko's "The Worm Man" about a criminal spy who shrinks size and does battle with a rat, and sent down a decree. No more rats.

The same month that Taboo returned, *Tales to Astonish* featured "I Discovered Gorgilla! The Monster of Mionight Mountain!" It was a longer version of the original Monstro story—or a retelling of King Kong, however one cares to slice it. Ultimately, the idea would be spun and respun as Konilla, The Brute that Walks, Bruttu, and a hairy host of others.

"I Was a Slave of the Living Hulk" appeared in *Journey into Mystery* #62 the next month. A typical alien invader, this is the character resurrected in the Marvel Universe to come as Xemnu, the Living Titan, but his origin represented the first eruption of the classic Marvel Monster phase. Lee had decreed that the Big Brown Monsters should have room to rampage and gave their tales 13 pages. Kirby went to town. Giant panels. Cinemascopic scale. Multiple chapters and splash pages Plenty of room to tell the story. And Kirby needed as much room he could get, because the Big Four were going monthly!

With the September and October, 1960 issues, all but *Tales of Suspense* went to a monthly schedule. Goodman held that to bi-monthly so *Kid Colt* could step up its frequency. But sales must have been disappointing. The decision was repealed, and finally with the January, 1961 issue, the periodicity of *Tales of Suspense* fell into step with its fantasy companions.

A final key figure enters the picture just as Stan was expanding. During the 1957-58 slump, Stan kept certain titles going. One was *Wyatt Earp*, whose sales were obviously helped by the TV show of the same name. Longtime Bullpenner Dick Ayers, penciled, inked and lettered the book, and Stan kept him reasonably busy during Atlas's year-long sleep. But when Lee replaced the book with Kirby's new version of *The Rawhide Kid*, he had no work to give Ayers, whose style was too down-to-earth for fantasy.

"I was struggling," Ayers recalls. "It came to a point that Stan himself, when I had delivered one of the Wyatt Earp stories, said, 'Dick, it's time to just get out of the business.' The way he put it, his uncle [publisher Martin Goodman] walked by the office and wouldn t even wave to him. It was like the ship was sinking and we all had to get off.

"So I went to go into the Post Office and took the test. I called Stan up and said, 'Well, I've taken the test.' He said, 'Let me just send you one thing to do before that happens ' And he sent me a [*Wyatt Earp*] cover that Jack Kirby had penciled. Then he sent me a monster story. And on one of his yellow carbon sheets—I still have it—he wrote, 'I love ya! Stan.' And I was off and running inking Jack."

The story was "I Created Sporr!" published in *TOS* #11 (September, 1960). Until then Kirby had been inked by everyone from future *Fantastic Four* inker Chris Rule to Wally Wood to Steve Ditko—not always with happy results. Ayers was a perfect inking fit. Not only did his style blend well, but he was instructed to augment the King's work so that Kirby could produce even more pages!

"Oh, I let myself go," Ayers admits. "I just enjoyed it. As Stan put it, I 'embellished.' I did my thing over Jack's pencils.

I was happy doing Western fillers and I got accustomed—comfortable—doing Jack's work. Jack did somewhere around 100 pages a month, and I did 80-90% of his work, I guess."

One intriguing aspect of this group of mags is that Stan Lee made absolutely no effort to differentiate them. Had DC published these titles, *Journey into Mystery* would have contained mystery stories, *Tales of Suspense*'s contents would have been true to its buzzword, while *Strange Tales* and *Tales to Astonish* would showcase fantasy yarns exclusively Thus, it's almost impossible to distinguish one from another.

Evidently, Lee had the same problem. When he ran "I Created Colossus"—the character who would later be revived in the Marvel Universe as It—in one book, Lee gave Colossus an unprecedented 18 pages in which to romp. At the end, he told his readers.

IMPORTANT NOTE:
Dear Reader,
Do you prefer full-length stories such as this one? Would you like to see more such epics? Write "Editor, 'Journey into Mystery', 655 Madison Ave. N.Y.C. 1, N.Y."

The trouble was this was *Tales of Suspense* #14!

Certain trends did surface—even if they may have been accidental. *Strange Tales* seemed to be where Kirby's dragons went to roost. Gargantus, a talking amphibious dragon, first appeared in *Strange Tales* #80 and #85. The more traditional Grogg appeared in *ST* #83 Green on the cover, he was mud-brown inside. When he returned in #87, it was the reverse. Fin Fang Foom, arguably Marvel's most famous pre-hero monster, appeared

PRE-HERO MARVEL

only two issues later. The only difference between the two was that Grogg breathed fire through his scaly nostrils. You have to wonder why Lee simply didn't give Grogg a third outing, and save the name for another monster.

Journey into Mystery was where the giant arachnids hung out. "Rorgg, King of the Spider Men," "The Spider Strikes" and "The Scorpion Strikes" appeared in various issues. *Tales of Suspense* was populated by overgrown irradiated plants like "The Green Thing" and "The Thing that Crawls by Night." *Tales of Astonish* belonged to the big monkeys like Gorgilla and Korilla.

Creating an original Big Brown Monster every month would challenge any writer. Doing it every week meant originality was sacrificed on the altar of meeting the relentless weekly deadline. Lee recycled as much as he dared. He dared a lot. "Zog" was redone as "Oog." Monstro sired an army of hairy super-apes. The aquatic Gargantus begat Goliath, who in turn begat Titan, the Amphibian from Atlantis. Taboo led to mud monsters of all descriptions. If Mummex, King of Mummies sold, then Gomdulla the Living Pharaoh was certain to follow. Elektro the robot monster led to Mechano the monster robot. If a huge gray ant named Grottu sold copies of *Strange Tales*, then why shouldn't a humongous red ant named Krang push *Tales to Astonish*?

Sometimes, Lee and Kirby reached pretty far to grab a casual newsstand browser, and found himself with a monster that just didn't work for cover purposes.

Bombu the Witch Man was one such white elephant. He had the face of an African witchdoctor's mask. Fine for the story, but for the cover, it just wasn't scary enough. Kirby monsterized him. Someone—maybe short-staffed Stan himself—took pen to the cover art and blackened in the lower face, making Bombu brutish enough to scare an 11 year old and entice him into buying *JIM* #60.

Klagg was a normal-sized alien, and not imposing enough to rate the cover of *Tales of Suspense* #21. But his giant robotic spaceship fit perfectly—except with its stubby limbs, it was as frightening as Gumby. Kirby drew it anyway. Lee—or somebody—doctored the cover to make the ship more threatening—and perpetrated the worst desecration of Kirby art this side of George Bell.

Trull the Inhuman was in a class all by itself. On the cover of *Tales to Astonish* #21, a pair of evil eyes blazed forth. Crack open the book, and there he was—a giant steam shovel come to life. The sheer audacity of the tale boggles the mind—but Jack Kirby's execution made it work.

Sometimes, Lee had no choice, as in *ST* #81's "The Scarecrow Walks!" With a title like that, how do you escape depicting a 40 foot building-crushing strawman in all his glory? The Scarecrow had familiar origin. When the US government detonates a powerful new nuclear device on an abandoned New Mexico farm, delta-rays ("more powerful than gamma rays" we are told) bombard a lonely scarecrow, causing it to swell to tree size and incidentally grow a brain. Because suddenly, it can talk and reason and develop a revenge fantasy. Years later, this exact origin would turn Bruce Banner into the Incredible Hulk.

Pre hero Marvels are littered with throw-away ideas that Lee and Kirby would later resurrect to build the Marvel Universe. The earliest I've discovered is "The Mutants and Me!" a Joe Sinnott tale from *Tales of Suspense* #6. A man suspects human mutants with super-powers live among us, only to find he's one of them! Ditko had earlier drawn a similar story, "The Man with the Atomic Brain." The only significant difference was the absence of the word, mutant.

"Dragoom, the Flaming Invader" was either an alien version of the old Human Torch, or Kirby's first stab at a new Torch. Either way, he appeared in *Strange Tales* #76, August, 1960.

Then there's Magneto. In reality an eight foot tall circus strongman man named Hunk Larsen, he looked like Mr. Clean without the gold earring. Selected to be the first man into space, Larsen, while up there encounters a cloud of radioactive anti-matter. When he returns to earth he has exactly the powers of The X-Men's Magneto. Figuring bald doesn't sell covers, Kirby depicted him on the cover of *Strange Tales* #84 as a hairy Big Brown Monster.

"The Thing Called Metallo" looked the same on the cover as the story in which he starred—except they made him brown on the cover of *TOS* #16. Inside, he was a cobalt-blue Iron Man prototype. Scientists invent a suit of radiation-resistant lead armor. They dub it the Hulk. But when escaped convict George Brown gets inside it, he changes the name to Metallo and runs amok. Until it's discovered Brown has cancer, which can only be cured by radiation treatments. Since he's impervious to radiation, Brown will have to climb out of the Hulk suit. The story ends on a classic Hobson's choice scenario, and the reader is left hanging.

"The Sandman Cometh" in *Journey into Mystery* #70 was in fact yet another alien invader. (Earth was being invaded an average of three times a months in Stan Lee's mags but readers never seemed to tire of the formula.) But he possessed much the same powers as Spider-Man's later foe.

A lot is made of these so-called "prototypes" among collectors. Sometimes too much. A mermaid story by Lee and Ditko, "Goodbye to Linda Brown," (*ST* #97, June 1962) featured a couple named Ben and May who bear an uncanny resemblance to Peter Parker's Aunt May and

Uncle Ben. Some consider this the first true appearance of these Marvel Universe characters. But in truth, this is probably Ditko employing so called "stock" character types, much as Kirby did with the familiar crowd-scene faces Lee called "Kirby's Kast of Kharacters." A younger version of the couple also appeared in a Civil War ghost story in *Amazing Adult Fantasy* #11, April, 1962. And a character who looked like Aunt May had cameoed all the way back in *TOS* #7, January, 1960, "I Come from the Shadow World." Clearly these resemblances are artistic, not literal.

True foreshadowings of the superheroes to come are rare. The time traveling villain of *Strange Tales* #92's "The Man Who Shrunk the World" wears a wild outfit Kirby would later recycle as the second costume for Human Torch foe Paste Pot Pete.

I suppose the high and low points of the pre-hero Marvel era were symbolized by Goom and Googam. Goom, the Thing from Planet X, was an orange batwinged alien giant who attempted to take over earth. After being soundly defeated in *TOS* #15, Goom had his revenge on us poor earthlings. In #17's "Googam! Son of Goom!" — well, the title tells it all. The difference between father and son was that Googam was one of the rare red Marvel monsters. He also lacked his father's tusks and wore trunks—or was it a diaper? Where Goom was imposing and powerful, Googam came off as, well, a round headed brat. It's perhaps fitting that Googam was defeated by a mere boy who lures him to his doom in a quicksand pit.

The monsters became so popular they began spilling over into Marvel's surviving Westerns. *Two-Gun Kid* #58 featured a Lee-Kirby epic called "The Monster of Hidden Valley." He looked like Fin Fang Foom's American cousin, but was only a freak giant bison in a trick hide. *Rawhide Kid* #22 resurrected Ditko's Living Totem. He was real, a creature that crawled up from a silver mine. Strip the book of its logo and it could have passed for an issue of *Strange Tales*. (Years later, a walking totem pole called Toomazooma would bedevil the Fantastic Four.)

That same month, June, 1961, Lee added a fifth title, *Amazing Adventures*. It led off with a big monster, but this book had one difference: Dr. Droom. Called Marvel's first post-Atlas superhero, he was a traveler who learns occult skills from a dying Tibetan lama and returns to the US to battle the kind of alien foes ordinary folk were fending off in the lead story. In many ways, he prefigures Dr. Strange, but without the Ditko mystique.

I don't know how Jack Kirby did it. He was drawing the lead features to five monster titles, most of *The Rawhide Kid*, and assorted stories in *Gunsmoke Western*. You'd think Lee would have given the poor guy a break and thrown a script or two Steve Ditko's way. But Ditko seemed typecast as Mr Back-of-the-Book. (Over at Charlton, however, he was drawing two giants named Konga and Gorgo with spectacular success.)

Kirby was drawing at such a furious, relentless pace that he himself might have been exposed to cosmic rays. His cartoony style mutated into a language of its own. Others noticed this, too.

"I have a theory about Kirby," Larry Lieber reflects. "If you look at the early books, Jack draws in more or less a normal style. As he was doing these monsters, particularly when he did Colossus, where he had to draw this creature of stone, it's almost like to make him look like stone he had to draw it in a different way. If you look at Colossus and Kirby's later style, they're similar. His style became angular and strong and simplified. After a while his people were slowly becoming like stone—more like the monster. I often thought that maybe it had started because of all the monsters he was doing which gave him such leeway to draw that way."

New inkers were brought in to take the load off overworked Dick Ayers. People like Chris Rule, Russ Heath, Joe Sinnott, Paul Reinman and Sol Brodsky. Lee chose them carefully because the always-rushed Kirby often needed his inker to clean up his mistakes.

Joe Sinnott first put his brush to Kirby pencils for a half-forgotten story in *Strange Tales* #94, March, 1962, "Pildorr, the Plunderer from Outer Space." It was the beginning of what would be a long collaboration.

"Up until that point, around 1961 or so," Sinnott says, "I had never inked anyone else's work. When Stan called me, I thought I was doing him a big favor. I really didn't have the time to ink it, but I felt I was helping him out of a jam, because he didn't have anybody to ink it."

"I like all of our inkers," Lee recalls. "I always thought that Ayers was very good on Kirby's stuff. Sinnott I felt was wonderful. I liked Sinnott and Ayers and Reinman and Brodsky even, because all four of them could pencil also. Reinman was good because he was also a painter and he inked in masses like a painter."

But even as he struggled to adapt his style and produce more and more pages, Kirby had his limits.

"The production was nuts," Kirby complained years later. "There were days where I was penciling and writing five or six pages in one day. But, there's only so much one man can do. I don't think I ever complained to anyone, except perhaps to my wife. But I remember feeling some resentment that things didn't ease off. You got to remember though, the whole industry was recovering from a major setback. Only a few years before, we were all afraid that we wouldn't have jobs. I think that's probably why I never complained, because I thought like Martin Goodman—I thought it wouldn't last."

Something had to give.

Continued on page 56

PART TWO: When Monsters Fall!

New eras dawn quietly sometimes. With the titles cover-dated August, 1961, all of Stan Lee's comics displayed a modest white box containing the initials "MC." It would be a couple of years before their significance was revealed, but Martin Goodman had decided to revert to a company name he'd not used since 1949—Marvel Comics. Big changes were in the wind.

Ultimately, the big monsters peaked in the summer of 1961. With the October and November issues, the Big Four were shaken up. The lead Kirby epic was replaced by two shorter tales, one 7 and the other 6 pages long. This change came suddenly and seemed forced. The transitional lead Kirby tales have a cramped look, as if he was squeezing 13 pages of script into 7 pages of art. Even the inking looked muddy and rushed.

I strongly suspect that this change came with a lot of Larry Lieber scripts on hand and in fact that's exactly what Kirby was forced to do. compress them to fit. You can see Kirby struggling to cram oversized monsters into undersized stories like the disappointing "Lo-Karr, Bringer of Doom," and the ludicrous "Orrgo the Unconquerable."

It took a few issues, but Lee cleared out the inventory and found a new approach. Smaller stories meant smaller monsters. And that's what Lee and company served up. Covers reflected the new slant. More ghosts and suspense. Normal-sized alien menaces became common. Godzilla-sized invaders were out.

One casualty was the returning monster. Several others had been created with sequels in mind, like *TOS* #17's "Vandoom! The Man who Made a Creature!" and *ST* #93's "The Thing Runs Amok!" Lee even threatened to bring back Googam, Son of Goom when he hinted at the tale's end: "Will Googam return? What dear reader, do you think?" But Googam and his ilk never resurfaced. They were on their way to becoming the dinosaurs of the Marvel Universe.

For several months the last stand of the Big Brown Monster was in *Amazing Adventures*. But even its hour was coming. Issue #6 featuring "Sserpo," was the last gasp. *AA* had showcased some of Kirby's more bizarre conceptions, like Torr, Robot X, and a rare dinosaur story. For some

obscure reason, Lee avoided classic dinosaurs in favor of original monsters.

"Jack Kirby was so fast!' Lieber noted. "He could draw about six pages a day, and I was very slow as a writer So I was always hurrying to feed Kirby stories. He needed them. I remember Saturday night running to the post office on 42nd Street, which was open on Saturday, and getting it out to Jack. 'Whew! Oh boy, now he'll have a story!' Jack would just turn that stuff out, and he was drawing all the monsters. One week it was Grogg, the next it was this monster or that monster. I went on doing them until the superheroes came."

More and more, it was becoming harder and harder to brainstorm new ideas. The March, 1961 issues of both *Tales to Astonish* and *Strange Tales* featured similar variations on the Frankenstein theme in virtually identical Transylvanian castles One was the classic "Vandoom" and the other "The Thing called... It!" The only real difference between the two giants was that the Thing—or should I say It?—was covered in mud. A few months later, they'd recycle the same story in *JIM* #72's "The Glob."

Autobiographical frustration began to creep into Lieber's scripts. Several stories centered around beleaguered writers and artists of fanta sy comics desperate to top themselves with bigger and better comic book monsters—only to find their creations coming to life. Another rare 18 pager, "X—the Thing That Lived" (*TOS* #20) and "Zzuttak the Thing that Shouldn't Exist!" (*ST* #88) were built on his deadpan premise and printed only months apart in the summer of 1961.

From the perspective of almost 40 years later, it's easy to make connections that might not be valid. I'd like to believe that the shakeup was kicked off by the launch of the *Fantastic Four* with a November cover date. Kirby would be needed for this critical new project Marvel's return to the superhero arena.

Except –the same month, Kirby began contributing heavily to Lee's only love books—*Love Romances* and *Teen-Age Romances*! From an historical point of view, it's incredible to think that Lee would squander Kirby on such trivia, but that was exactly what he did.

But something had to give. Unfortunately, it was the last stand of the big monsters—*Amazing Adventures*. With the 7th issue, it was recreated and reborn as.. *Amazing Adult Fantasy*!

The true origins of *Amazing Adult Fantasy* have never been fully explored. It's assumed that Lee simply decided to build a book around the tricky 5 pagers he and Ditko were doing every month. But there's more to it than that.

Amazing Adult Fantasy goes back to a single 5 pager in *Tales to Astonish* #21, July, 1961. "The Silent Screen" was a tale told entirely through art and minimalist captions. No dialogue. It was an experiment, constructed like nested Chinese boxes. Moviegoers watching a film called The Hulk (about a reptilian monster) find themselves sinking into shifting levels of reality... It is really a movie? Are they really screen watchers, or participators? What is real and what is not?

Lee was attempting something different, and he signaled his intent at tale's end:

"Like to see more stories like this? Write to: Stan Lee, Editor, 655 Madison Ave, N.Y."

Clearly, Lee had something special in mind.

In the December issue, Lee ran a very similar story, "Dream World!" An unusual note was inserted in the splash page.

Editor's Note:
Remember our sensational tale, 'The Silent Screen' a few issues ago? We still get letters asking for another such unusual tale... And now, in response to all your requests—here it is, by the same talented artist-writer team who brought you the now classic 'Silent Screen'!

In "Dream World!" a nameless everyman dreams he's floating out of bed—then he wakes up—and starts floating off the bed, only to wake up and repeat the cycle until he can't tell if he's finally awake or still in dreamland. Effectively presented without dialogue, Lee added a slug at the bottom that would be seen at the end of every Ditko tale for months to come:

"Like this type of story? Then don't miss *Amazing Adult Fantasy* comics. On sale now!"

The crown jewel of Marvel's pre-hero era, *AAF* was an unadulterated Lee-Ditko vehicle. Every issue carried six fables ranging from three to five pages. Off Beat. Scary Humorous. Poignant. Unpredictable. Juvenile monsters or semi-heroic everymen were nowhere to be found. Lee was aiming for a more sophisticated reader as the tagline on every cover proudly proclaimed: "The Magazine That Respects Your Intelligence."

According to Ditko, favorable mail on these 5-pagers led Lee and Goodman to conclude a title filled with them would sell well.

"I think I was prouder of the ones I did with Ditko," Lee explained. "I tried to make those the more O. Henry ones. I think I liked them the best. I liked working with Ditko on that stuff. He was wonderful!"

It's easy to tell from where Lee got the form. Rod Serling's *Twilight Zone* was then a ratings hit in TV All of America was transfixed by what had formerly been dismissed as fantasy pulp. And Lee's pride in the book is evident to even the most casual collector Lee signed every story—and the covers! I've never seen Stan Lee sign any other cover's title. But virtually every *AAF* cover is signed—signed, mind you—Stan Lee and S. Ditko

"It's funny," Lee adds. "When *The Twilight Zone* TV show came out—and there were two others shows like it, *One Step Beyond* or something—I used to get letters from some of our readers. 'Hey, I just saw *Twilight Zone*, and they used one of your stories from issue so-and-so.'"

Truthfully, *AAF* wasn't completely original. Years back, Lee had experimented with a similar all-Stan Lee suspense title called *Menace*. But different artists executed his scripts. Even the cover story to *AAF* #7—depicting a child facing off a just-landed alien—had been cover featured before, in *Marvel Tales* #134.

Lee likes to tell the story of how in 1961, he was bored with comic books and thinking of moving on. He found the types of tales he had to script and edit inexpressibly juvenile. The consummate company man, he wrote the kind of comics his publisher decreed, but he yearned to break out into something more creatively satisfying. On the verge of moving on, his wife Joan prevailed upon him to try writing for an adult audience.

"I never took comics seriously," Lee recounts. "It was just a way to make a living. I was always waiting for my chance to get out of comics, and do real writing. Then for whatever reason in the '60s, I really was getting ready to quit and my wife said to me, 'Before you quit, why don't you once do a book the way you'd like to do it? Get it out of your system. You're going to leave anyway. What can they do to you?' So I tried to write The Fantastic Four differently, just to get it out of my system. This is the way I liked to treat characters. It worked!"

Thus was born, Lee likes to say, The Fantastic Four, and the modern Marvel Age of Comics.

PRE-HERO MARVEL

Lee leaves out the fact that *Amazing Adult Fantasy* was an equal part of this push for more adult comics. If you want proof of this bold assertion, look no further than the two mastheads. They use an identical Sol Brodsky lettering style. No other Marvel mastheads of that era shared cover logo typography

A minor mystery is that how Goodman and Lee were able to publish *The Fantastic Four* at all. His pact with Independent News forbade them from publishing superheroes that might compete with Superman and Batman, but the FF's lack of costumes might have been the loophole that permitted their publication More to the point, FF was technically Goodman's 17th title. Perhaps in the transition from *Amazing Adventures* to *Amazing Adult Fantasy*, a subtle subterfuge was successfully perpetrated

Meanwhile, Lee, Leiber, Kirby and the rest were shepherding the Big Four through its transitional stage—blissfully unaware that a revolution was right around the corner. One that would doom the kind of tales they have been spinning for a scant three years now

Fantastic Four was groping along as a kind of quasi-monster book. It was too early to tell if it was going to hit. Although the bloom was off fantasy monsters, they still sold well enough that an all-reprint *Strange Tales Annual* was planned for the summer of '62. It would be Marvel's first true annual.

Enter The Incredible Hulk

Strangely, the Hulk didn't come out of the blue either. Many stories have been told about the Hulk's origins. That it was simply an attempt to give a Marvel monster his own book, nothing more. Kirby gave several accounts over the years, but the one that rings truest is that in the last months of 1961, publisher Martin Goodman learned that Aurora's Frankenstein model kits were selling through the roof and ordered Lee to put out a book modeled after the Universal/Boris Karloff Frankenstein monster. Given that *Hulk* #1 was probably prepared at the end of '61, the timing suggests that this is what kicked off the character

PRE-HERO MARVEL MILESTONES...

1957

1959

1958

Dec • Strange Worlds #1

1959

• Tales to Astonish #8

• Tales of Suspense #11

Sep • Journey into Mystery #54

1960

Feb • Strange Tales #73 (Grottu,

(last Atlas-style issue)

(Orogo, the Thing from

(Mummex, King of Mummies)

(Return of Living Robot)

(title canceled)

• My Girl Pearl #7 (titled

(now monthly)

1961

Jan • Kid Colt (reverts to bi-

(The Return of the Hulk!)

Nov • Miss America #93

Yet *JIM* #79 featured a very similar character, a twist on Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde called the Midnight Monster. Although that tragic character ended up falling down a bottomless pit, his spirit was reincarnated in the person of Bruce Banner. The job numbers—those inventory control codes hand-lettered on every splash page—attached to "The Midnight Monster" and *Hulk* #1 prove conclusively that the *JIM* character was created first, and probably inspired the latter as much as the Frankenstein kit. And this also fits in with numerous Lee and Kirby assertions that both classic monsters inspired their ultimate monster, the last and greatest of a long line of pre-hero Hulks.

But that wasn't all. The same month Dr. Doom premiered in *Fantastic Four* #5, *Tales of Suspense* featured a character wearing an identical iron mask. "The Monster in the Iron Mask" was the lead story in *TOS* #31. As presented on the cover, he looked like a gigantic version of the green Hulk wearing Doom's trademark iron mask. Inside, he was the same brownish-orange as the Thing. In reality, he was an alien whose mask concealed a secret far greater than his face. Again, job numbers indicate that Kirby drew the monster before he created the man.

When sales figures came in on *Tales to Astonish* #27, Lee and Goodman puzzled over what made its numbers jump. They decided it had to be the cover story, "The Man in the Ant Hill," about hapless scientist Henry Pym whose reducing serum shrinks him to ant size and leads to a fierce experience inside a backyard ant colony.

Once again, a seemingly minor player made a big difference.

"I enjoyed the monsters," Dick Ayers relates. "They always had terrific names—Sporr and Fin Fang Foom and all that. Remember Ant-Man? That's where he started. I enjoyed that first Ant-Man story so much I told Stan in a memo, 'We gotta do something with him.'"

"Ant-man started as 'The Man in the Anthill,'" recalls Larry Lieber, who scripted him from the start. "Stan just gave me the story about a guy—I forget the story now—and he turns into an antman or is reduced in size, and that was it. To me the most interesting thing was the drawing problem because I had to write it so it could be drawn."

By now, the *FF* was a certifiable hit. Before, Lee would have simply instructed brother Larry to

	• Strange Tales #92 (Thing Called "It!" (1st 13-pager)	Sep	• Signed Lee-Ditko collaborations begin	Apr	• Journey into Mystery #79 (The Midnight Monster)
	• Tales to Astonish #17 (Vandoom, the Man Who Made a Creature! 1st 13-pager)		• Kid Colt #100 (The Witch Doctor Strikes)		• Tales to Astonish #30 (The Return of the Gorilla-Man)
	• Tales of Suspense #15		• Journey into Mystery #72 (The Glob; last Journey into Mystery 13-pager)		• Incredible Hulk #1
				Jul	• Tales of Suspense #31 (Monster in Iron Mask)
	(Beware of Googam, Son of		(Sserpo! The Creature Who		(The Man in the Bee Hive!)
	• Tales to Astonish 20		• Amazing Adult Fantasy #7		(Human Torch begins)
		1962			
	(The Silent Screen)	Jan	• Tales to Astonish #27		(I Accepted the Deadly
Aug					
	• Strange Tales #87 (The Return of Grogg)	Feb	• Tales to Astonish #28 (I am the Gorilla-Man)		last Kirby ish, new logo)
	• Tales of Suspense #20 (Colossus Lives Again)	Mar	• Strange Tales #94 (Pildorr, Plunderer from Outer Space)	Dec	• Tales of Suspense #36 (Meet Mr Meek!; return to 13-page lead)

		1963	
Jun	• Tales of Suspense #37 (Hagg! Hunter of Helpless Humans!; last 13-pager)		
Feb	• Tales of Suspense #38 (The Teen-Ager Who Ruled the		
			Commandos #1
			monthly
Oct	• Strange Tales #113 (Shoe-		
	• Tales to Astonish #48 (The Little Green Man!)		
	• Tales of Suspense #46 (The Gargoyles)		

script "The Return of the Man in the Ant Hill" for Kirby to draw. Now things were different. He gave the order to turn Pym into a superhero.

"I didn't even know that these things were going to get their own books," Lieber admitted. "I thought, 'Oooh, they're trying something a little new, or else they've run out of monsters and this is another thing that will just be for a while."

But the superhero was not merely the next trend, they were the next wave.

Just to be on the safe side, Lee ordered "The Man in the Bee Hive" for *Tales of Suspense* #32, about a mutant beekeeper who possesses some pretty strange powers, including size-changing and the ability to mentally control his bees. No sequel ever appeared. It was too late for fantasy.

It was probably lucky that Ayers made the suggestion he did. Just after the first Henry Pym story, *Tales to Astonish* featured a character called the Gorilla Man—about a cracked scientist who exchanges bodies with an ape. He sold well enough that he returned two issues later—although in his haste, Kirby managed to draw a completely different-looking human version of the character! Gorilla Man was the last returning pre-hero monster, and it was only sheer good luck that Lee didn't select him for superhero treatment!

The winds of change were ripening to hurricane velocity. For Jack Kirby, the switch to superheroes came just in time.

"I had to do something different," he once admitted. "The monster stories have their limitations—you can just do so many of them. And then it becomes a monster book month after month, so there had to be a switch because the times weren't exactly conducive to good sales."

Heck, too was relieved—although he was no fan of superheroes. "I was more interested when the story took the whole book," Heck admitted. "You'd have more time to develop things, rather than bang, bang, bang, here we are in New York, then we go over to Paris. You had all these changes in five pages, and you're only getting twenty dollars a page. Big deal. Try to think of *Star Wars* in five pages."

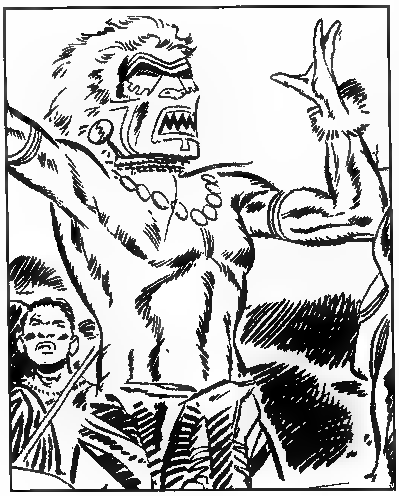
Of the artists working at this time, only Steve Ditko seemed sorry to see the era of the 5-page fantasy tale pass from the scene. He would continue to produce them for various Charlton comics well into the 1980s.

It was like a tidal wave. Marvel had always lagged behind DC in following trends. Now their superheroes were coming in full force. And one by one, the Big Four succumbed.

The Mighty Thor appeared without warning in the August, 1962, *JIM*. Simultaneously, Spider-Man took the lead in the retitled *Amazing Fantasy*. (Readers had complained they were embarrassed by the word "Adult.") The next month, Ant-Man took over *Tales to Astonish*. October saw The Human Torch spin off from the FF to land in *Strange Tales*. Only *Tales of Suspense* continued as a pure fantasy vehicle.

Adding to the pressure, FF went monthly in September. Then Lee and Kirby created the new masked version of The Two-Gun Kid. The expansion of Kirby's responsibilities are the reasons cited for the long lag before Iron Man appeared in *TOS* #39, dated March, 1963.

But there's reason to doubt this convenient explanation.



The last issue of *TOS* in the classic pre-hero format—Kirby lead story, with Reinman, Heck and Ditko filling out the book -was #35 (November 1962). It was also the first issue to feature the new encapsulated cover logo. Why change logos? Maybe because you intend to keep the magazine going as is, and want to spiff it up. But all the spiffing in the world couldn't keep *TOS* alive. Not without Jack Kirby. Over the next four issues, a valiant attempt to keep the last pre-hero Marvel viable would be made. Lee went back to the abandoned 13 page lead story Don Heck drew the lead feature to #36, "Meet Mr. Meek!" and Steve Ditko finally got to draw a Marvel-style big monster tale with "Haag, Hunter of Helpless Humans," and still managed to produce a typical 5-pager to close out the issue. It was one of his finest hours. (It was also Ditko's first time working from a Larry Lieber script; so isolated were the artists from one another, that Ditko would only learn the true extent of Lieber's contributions to this era when the truth came out 30 years later.)

The true final pre-hero issue of *TOS* was bizarre to say the least. Jack Davis did an 11-page lead, "The Teen-Ager Who Ruled the World," about a punk who gets control over a Genie. Heck and Ditko rounded out the issue.

Then it was over. Or was it?

Truthfully, not just yet. It's easy to forget that for much of 1963, Lee kept Ditko on the back of the book, supplemented by Sol Brodsky, Joe Sinnott, and brother Larry, who had started drawing his own scripts on a host of fantasy 5-pagers. Heck had dropped out to handle art chores on Ant Man and Iron Man. But Lee and Ditko soldiered on.

They might have soldiered on another year or two, but for the fact that Spider-Man had been launched in his own magazine in March. The lead story originally commissioned for *Amazing Fantasy* #16 launched the new magazine. Two orphaned Ditko fantasy yarns, "Prophet of Doom!" and "My Fatal Mistake," appeared in *TOS* #40 and *TTA* #43, respectively. They were the last gasp of *Amazing Adult Fantasy*, without which no *AAF* collection could be complete.

The true death blow to pre-hero magazines came when Spider-Man went monthly with the September issue. That same month, Tales of Asgard took over the Ditko slot in *Journey into Mystery*. The last Ditko 5-pagers appeared in the other three titles in October. Ditko simply swapped fantasy for Dr. Strange in *Strange Tales*. (He also picked up penciling chores on Iron Man, but this would be short-lived.)

It's true that new Larry Lieber tales lasted a little while longer, but they were lame by comparison, and not part of the main trend. He too switched over to features like "Tales of the Watcher" and "Tales of the Wasp," which were simply fantasy stories told by a fantasy narrator, until the last gasp had finally been gasped in the summer of 1964.

In all, the pre-hero Marvel era enjoyed a span of exactly five years. But what years they were. What ground they broke and what wonders they conjured up, that tiny band of talents who struggled for so long to merely survive and ended up becoming masters of the comic book universe.

Special thanks to Dr. Michael J. Vassallo, and the gang at the Grand Comics Database. http://www.comics.org.8000, and the creators quoted in this article, as well as Steve Ditko.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Continued from page 6

It was the Torpey-Goodman connection that started Goodman in the comic publishing direction. Everett's most enduring and unique creation was clearly Sub-Mariner, but alas he left the strip to join the service in late 1941. After his departure, others took over the Sub-Mariner strip. Everett would not return to comics for five years.

I also found that a lot has been published (in the fan press) over the years about the Sub-Mariner stories in *Marvel Mystery*, but I could find very little about the Subby stories in the first three *Human Torch* issues and *Sub-Mariner* #1-3. Because of the general lack of documentation, their relative chronologies (see my timeline), and their early Everett Sub-Mariner contents, I developed a keen curiosity about them.

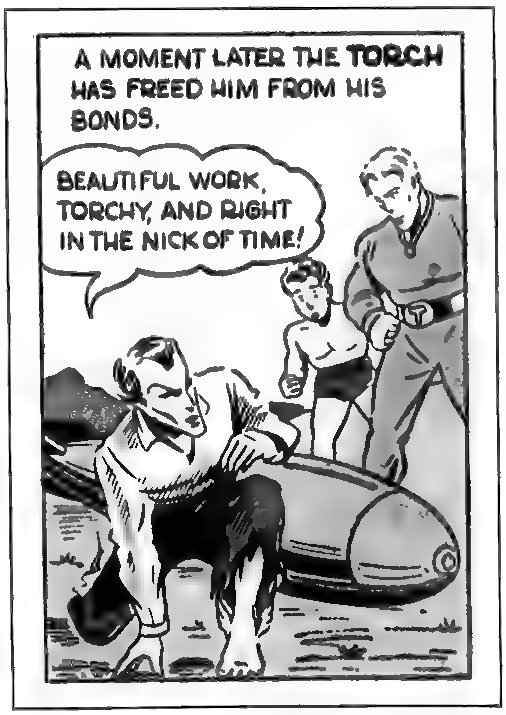
That curiosity lead me to some interesting discoveries and some surprising realizations when I finally got the opportunity to read the actual comics. My first noteworthy observation was the fact that Subby was treated almost like a "back-up feature" in the *Human Torch* title *before* getting his own magazine. Not only that, but when you count the number of Subby covers on *Marvel Mystery*... (compared with Human Torch), it seems clear that Namor was viewed as having less sales appeal than Torch.

Also the Subby stories in *Marvel Mystery* are generally shorter and therefore shed less light (in my opinion) on the complexity of the character. In contrast the six issues mentioned above provide some novel and rarely documented insights into Everett's unique "antihero" found nowhere else in the Timely universe.

To illustrate what I mean, consider first the Subby story in *Human Torch* #2 (Fall 1940). It's notable for many reasons, including Everett's almost-alien Atlantean "flying" subs, the demonizing of Germany and U-Boats more than a year before Pearl Harbor, the fact that the story takes place in Baltimore (home of the Navy shipyard). It begins with a wonderful splash page that relates back to the HT/Subby battle in *Marvel Mystery* #9 and 10. The memorable opening panel shows a newspaper headline which reads "SUB-MARINER CRASHES NEW YORK AGAIN!!!" But it's the fine print that contains the fun. A close up of the "Manhattan Daily Express Special Edition" reveals "No 1 VOL. 2 PUBLISHED BY MARVEL COMICS, NEW YORK-FALL, 1940" (the reverse of *Human*

The SUB-MARINER
BY Bill Everett
NAMOR, NOW EMPEROR OF THE SUB-SEA, AGAIN VENTURES OUT TO BATTLE ····THIS TIME WITH MOTHER NATURE AND ALL HER FORCE OF TERRIBLE ELEMENTS AS HIS OPPONENT!
BUT LET US FIRST TAKE A TRIP TO A LAND CLOSE BY THE ARCTIC CIRCLE ····
REGISTERED U S PAT OFF 1940
COPYRIGHT 1939, 1940-1941

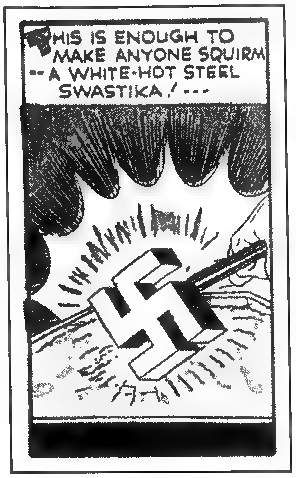
Breathtaking Sub-Mariner splash panel from Human Torch #4 (Spring 1941)



Moments before he falls to his death, Namor is rescued by the Human Torch. In the same issue (Human Torch #3, Winter 1940-41) Sub-Mariner meets Torch's kid sidekick, Toro, for the very first time

Torch Vol 1 #2 the actual number of the comic) Further the byline is 'By BILL EVERETT (SPECIAL TO MARVEL COMICS)' an inside joke, no doubt, for Everett and the staff

Three months later, *Human Torch* #3 (dated Winter 1940-41) hit the stands This one contains an historic first Torch actually saves Sub Mariner from falling to his death plus Subby meets Toro for the first time



And again Everett pulls our leg with an inside joke Fandom has long known that Everett's 'Sub Mariner" was inspired by Coleridge's epic poem *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and pronounced the same way, but with the 'sub' as a prefix According to Everett interview in *Alter Ego*, the newspapers of the early 1940s were filled with stories of U-Boats and submarines, Sub-Mariner was often mispronounced (by kids and adults alike) "Sub-Mareeener' Other sources suggest that fellow artists and writers would sometimes give Bill a little kidding purposefully mispronouncing the name of his character in jest

That's what makes panel 8, page 4, in *Human Torch* #3 so interesting When Namor is waylaid by German sailors, their dialogue is written by Everett to mispronounces Subby's name as 'SOB-MAREENER!' an obvious satire of the chronic mispronunciation of the Prince-of the Seas name

At the last panel of the Subby story (and the issue), a fateful question is asked, How many of you would like to see a complete 64-page book on Sub-Mariner? Let us know—will you?' know one knows how many young readers answered, but Subby's own book (#1, Spring 1941) came out almost simultaneously with *Human Torch* #4 (The Library of Congress records show the registration date for *Subby* #1 as February 25, 1941) The 10-page Arctic ice saga in *HT* #4 begins with a killer splash and ends with 'Hey Kids!!! Got my new book yet??? It's on sale now at all newsstands get your copy right away before they're all gone!!'

And they probably did sell fast because Everett went all out on *Sub Mariner* #1 The opening splash is one of the all-time best anti-Nazi classics in Timely history and the incredible 40 page, two story opus that follows contains some of Everett's finest early work. After considering the incredible work contained in this Timely key, I'll go on record and say that I think *Sub Mariner* #1 is a real high water mark in comic history and is one of the great comic books of the entire Golden Age!

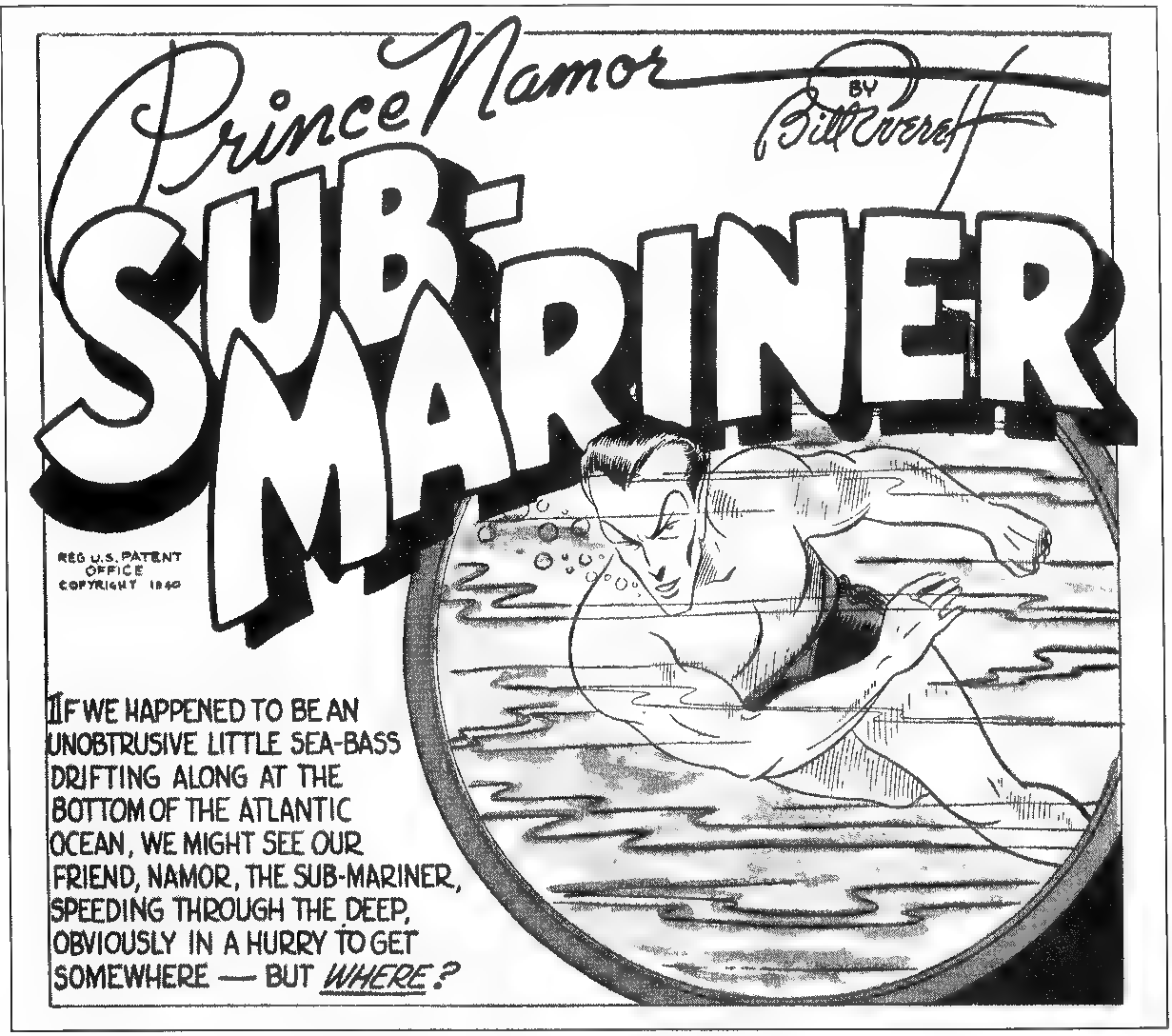
YOU'RE A BUM GUESSER!
POW!
AE-EEE!
SUDDENLY SUB-MARINER, SUMMONING ALL HIS STRENGTH, GOES INTO ACTION!
OH, NO, YOU DO THE JUMPING HA! HA!
A FLYING JUMP FOR YOURSELF!
OWN TUMBLES THE TORTURER, A SCREAMING, WRITHING HEAP AS THE SWASTIKA CONTACTS HIS FLESH! ...
IT BURNS! OH! HOW IT BURNS! I CAN'T STAND IT! I CAN'T STAND IT!
14

In Sub-Mariner #3 (Fall 1941) Namor turns the tables on his Nazi captors... and foils their attempt to brand his chest with a white-hot Swastika.
FACING PAGE: **Splash from HT #3 (Winter 1940-41)**

Perhaps its the overwhelming impact and superior work in #1 that make *Sub Mariner* #2 (Summer 1941) pale in comparison. The art is good but the scripting has only a few good moments (like Subby swimming up Niagara Falls for fun, and the newspaper in the second splash 'Marvel News'), but I feel the issue is, overall, less imaginative and the dialogue less compelling

Towards the back however, there is a two-page text story that is noteworthy, both because of its title and byline The second issue filler is entitled The Story Behind The Cover" and the byline reads 'Stan Lee" It's easy to imagine how this scenario came about because the Alex Schomburg rendered cover is not a scene from either of the two Sub Mariner stories, nor the Angel back up feature Likely worried because of this incongruity Stan wrote a story about the cover scene, perhaps in an attempt to head off possible criticism from readers I guess this concern for covers relating to interior contents was abandoned, because Timely books, (as did all Golden Age in general) featured hundreds of covers that had little or no relationship to their interior stories

Sub Mariner #3 (Fall 1941) nearly approaches the quality of issue #1, and starts with with Winston Churchill addressing Parliament regarding the Nazi Blitz of London and continues at Rockhenge the site of a ruined druid temple on the English


Prince Namor
BY
Bill Everett
SUB-MARINER
REG U.S. PATENT OFFICE
COPYRIGHT 1940
IF WE HAPPENED TO BE AN UNOBTRUSIVE LITTLE SEA-BASS DRIFTING ALONG AT THE BOTTOM OF THE ATLANTIC OCEAN, WE MIGHT SEE OUR FRIEND, NAMOR, THE SUB-MARINER, SPEEDING THROUGH THE DEEP, OBVIOUSLY IN A HURRY TO GET SOMEWHERE — BUT WHERE?

moors!" (You read that right Stonehenge was changed to Rockhenge.)

The intricate and phenomenally well written plot continues with mentions of Noah's flood, altars of human sacrifice, ancient Druids still surviving in subterranean caves, and an attempt by a Nazi torturer to brand Subby's chest with a white hot swastika.

Add some incredible battle scenes full of hordes of ancient warriors in full druid regalia and a giant octopus, and you have a true Sub-Mariner classic! The storytelling is perfect, the plot suspenseful and the art is superb! At about $1,800 in GD, *Subby* #1 may be out of range for many collectors but *Sub-Mariner* #3 Guides for a paltry $300 in GD or thereabouts. That puts this little Timely treasure well within the range of affordability!

Thanks for allowing me to spend a little more time than usual with you this issue and I hope you gained an insight or two. I know I did. My research has reaffirmed what many collectors already know that Bill Everett was one of the greatest talents to ever touch brush to paper and his creation Sub-Mariner was an innovative archetype that continues to be a unique artistic milestone in comic book history.

May you fill the Timely holes on your want list.

Gary

Gary M. Carter, Editor

	1939			1940												1941											
	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Marvel Comics	1	1a																									
Marvel Mystery			2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Daring Mystery				1	2		3	4	5			6							7		8						
Mystic Comics						1	2		3		4	5	6		7			8		9			10				
Red Raven											1																
Human Torch												2	2	2	3	3	3	4	4	4	5	5	5	5a	5a	5a	6
Sub-Mariner																		1	1	1	2	2	2	3	3	3	4
Captain America																		1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9
All Winners																					1	1	1	2	2	2	3

The above graph shows the relative chronology of early Timely titles, including Human Torch #2-4 and Subby #1-3

THE MICHAEL NAIMAN REPORT

Marvel Price Variants... Who's Smirking Now?

San Diego is a full 30 days behind us and the profitable afterglow of a strong market is still shining upon the hobby! Not only is the traditional Golden Age, Atom Age, and Silver Age, product doing well, but the oft overlooked Bronze Age is alive and kicking too.

As reported in earlier issues by Jon McClure, the Marvel variant marketplace is white hot with action. Who woulda thunk it? At the Overstreet Advisors meeting in May, McClure reported record sales of variant issues and you should have seen the unbelieving smirks on many a dealer's face. "Who is this guy and what is he talking about?" was murmured here and there in the room. Well true believers, you'd better believe it now! Start digging through those 25¢ throw-away boxes and grab a past issue of CBM to look for Jon's list.

Within the past 60 days the following 35¢ variant books sold as a group for $3,800! All of these were in VF or better condition.

Amazing Spider-Man #171, 173; Avengers #162, 163, 164; Black Panther #5; Captain America #211, 212; Captain Marvel #51; Champions #15; Conan #75, 77, 78; DareDevil #147; Doctor Strange #24; Eternals #13-16; Fantastic Four #183, 185; Ghost Rider #24, 25; Godzilla #2; Hulk #213, 214; Inhumans #12; Invaders #17-21; Iron Fist #13; Iron Man #101, 102; John Carter #1, 2, 5; Kull #21, 22; Logan's Run #6; Marvel Premiere #37; Marvel Presents #11; Marvel Super Action #2, 3; Marvel Team-Up #58, 59, 60; Marvel Two-In-One #29, 31; Master of Kung Fu #53, 55, 56; Ms. Marvel #6-8; Nova #11-13; Omega #9; Powerman #44, 46; Red Sonya #4; Spectacular Spider-Man #7, 9, 11; Star Wars #3; Super Villain Team-Up #12; Tarzan #1, 2, 3; Thor #261, 262; Tomb of Dracula #58; 2001 #7 & 9.

If that wasn't enough, here's something else to send you prospecting for variants. The 35¢ variant of Iron Fist #14 (first appearance of Sabretooth, August 1977) in VF+ condition has sold for $1,200!! That would be 13.33 times current Overstreet Guide. Gulp! Other remarkable variant sales include X-Men #105 VF+ $109 (3.3X Guide); Godzilla #1 VF+ $60 (2.4X Guide), and Star Wars #1 VF $724 (1.42X Guide). Who's smirking now? How long will it take the guides to catch up with these prices and reports? Time will tell.

On another exciting note, sales of original comic art at the San Diego show were remarkable. More comic book dealers were branching out into comic art than ever before. And, the prices that were being asked were also remarkable. But, they were also being snatched up at those Mile High prices. Recorded sales included the complete story from X-Men #8 for $30,000; the complete story from Fantastic Four #53 for $40,000, the cover to Fantastic Four #72 for $35,000, the cover to Planet Comics #1 (Fiction House, 1940) by Will Eisner and Lou Fine sold for $60,000 (cash and trade), and the cover to DareDevil #38 sold for $7,500.

Joe and Nadia Mannarino of All-Star Auctions report that the San Diego show was one of their best shows in some time. "I was amazed at how many new faces we encountered at our booth, it appears as if many collectors are diversifying their interests beyond comic books," said Joe. Some of the sales included: "Conjure Woman" a Bernie Wrightson splash page from a fanzine called A Look Back (1971) sold for $1,225; a Sal Buscema cover from Avengers #67 (1969) measuring 15" x 10" sold for $5,100; Winsor McCay page measuring 18.5" x 13.5" from Dream of the Rarebit Fiend (1905) $1,625; Steve Ditko art from page #18 of Amazing Spider-Man #21 measuring 18.5" x 12.5" sold for $5,500; a Carmine Infantino splash page from Mystery in Space #81 "The Cloud Creature that Menaced Two Worlds" measuring 17" x 13" sold for $2,950; and a Jim Steranko cover art from Doc Savage #3 (1973) measuring

(Continued on page 70)

MARKET REPORTS

TERRY HOKNES
739 TAYLOR STREET EAST
SASKATOON, SK, CANADA
306•343•6597
comicsape@dlcwest.com

All my sales are from the Internet. I feel strict grading is the key to sales and building a good rapport with customers. Overgrading and incorrect grading is the norm on the net. Everybody grades differently but I think consistent grading is the key to let the customer know your "grading style."

TV and Hanna Barbera related comic books are having the most impressive sales primarily in lower grades. VG copies (average copies) are still complete and look fairly decent to most non-comic collectors and sell at the highest percentage. Scooby Doo, for example, is a hot title that can sell easily for $30 in VG.

Based on comic standards that should mean the NM copy should sell for $100. BUT this is not the case. The NM copy will still only sell for $30. Non-comic collectors just want a decent copy and do not base prices on the specific grade.

Ronald McDonald (Charlton) is another great example. I sold a complete copy in GD+ which Guided for $4 when I sold it for $140. It was a complete copy and that was good enough for the collector who bought it. NM copies do not exist but GD, VG, and FN copies can sell for the exact same price to non-comic collectors.

Recent Sales: Adv. Comics #416 (100 page) VG $25. Adv. On The Planet Of The Apes #1-11 FN+ $80, #11 VF $10, #7 VF $12, #9 VF $10; Best Of DC Digest #41 (Sugar & Spike) NM $35, #65 (Sugar & Spike) NM $25, #68 (Sugar & Spike) NM $25, Date With Debbi #4 VG $7, Foom #7 FN+ $8, #8 FN+ $8, #9 FN+ $8.

L. Kids #3 FN+ $10, Perry Mason Mystery #1

◆◆ CBM MarketWatch ◆◆

A report of market indicator sales (including % of Guide) by Michael Naiman

Action

#18 GD	$250	97%
#18 AppVG	$315	61%
#27 VG	$325	98%

Adventure

#290 VF+	$84	81%

All American

#11 VF	$1,000	1.70X

All-Flash

#1 VG	$1,375	61%
#5 GD+	$100	94%
#5 AppVG	$331	1.56X
#16 GD	$147	2.26X
#27 VF	$325	1.07X

All-Star

#44 GD-	$80	80%
#30 FN	$300	89%
#43 VF	$475	83%
#55 VG	$200	Guide

Amazing Spider-Man

#1 VG	$900	60%
#3 AppNM	$475	23%
#5 FN+	$227	63%
#6 FN+	$255	85%
#9 VG+	$132	90%
#10 VG+	$110	83%
#13 VF	$410	1.03X
#17 GD	$40	83%
#17 FN	$106	74%
#28 NM	$725	2.01X
#50 NM	$370	95%
#90 VF	$24	48%

Atomic War

#4 NM	$455	1.03X

Avengers

#1 FN	$515	1.03X
#6 VF	$110	94%
#96 NM	$27	77%

Baby Huey

#88 NM	$23	1.25X

Batman

#3 VG	$811	56%
#10 VG-	$450	82%
#17 VG-	$300	88%
#33 GD-	$85	83%
#44 GD	$100	80%
#54 GD-	$65	96%
#62 GD	$140	1.4X
#110 GD	$25	76%
#187 VF+	$120	3.07X

Captain America

#33 VG-	$400	1.30X
#52 FN	$375	1.11X
#66 GD-	$200	1.31X
#150 NM	$17	2.83X

Captain Marvel Adventures

#17 NM-	$600	Guide

Casper's Ghostland

#14 NM	$50	1.19X
#21 NM	$40	1.25X
#29 NM	$40	1.25X
#30 NM	$40	1.25X
#34 NM	$40	1.25X
#35 NM	$40	1.25X

Casper, the Friendly Ghost

#V1 #20 NM (Harvey copy, 1st wendy)	$240	1.5X

Crimes by Women

#54 NM	$220	1.29X

Dark Mysteries

#19 NM	$675	3X

Detective

#80 GD	$150	1.39X
#153 VF	$175	51%
#174 VF	$220	76%
#230 VF	$375	1.21X
#117 FN	$140	72%

Fantastic Four

#1 VG	$1,200	81%
#2 GD	$250	1.04X
#34 VF	$51	87%
#41 VF	$28	72%
#48 NM-	$800	94%

Flash

#8 VF (Larson)	$2,562	1.72X

Four Color

#17 GD (Popeye)	$71	1.48X
#95 GD (Roy Rogers)	$50	1.51X
#98 FN (Lone Ranger)	$77	89%
#108 GD (Donald Duck)	$40	36%
#136 VF (Lone Ranger)	$88	64%
#139 GD (Little Lulu)	$48	1.92X
#146 GD (Little Lulu)	$36	1.42X
#147 GD+ (Donald Duck)	$79	1.02X
#203 GD (Donald Duck)	$31	72%
#414 FN (Beany & Cecil)	$36	77%
#877 FN+ (Rex Allen)	$22	81%
#1003 GD+ (Zorro)	$27	2.45X
#1102 VF Steve McQueen)	$33	0%

Friendly Ghost, Casper

#1 NM (Harvey)	$360	1.5X

JLA

#1 FN	$503	74%

Journey into Mystery

#111 VF	$43	96%
#116 VF-	$61	1.35X

Katie Keene Pin Up Parade

#1 VF	$345	1.47X

Little Audrey Clubhouse

#NM (Harvey)	$85	1.21X

Little Audrey TV Funtime

#1 NM (Harvey)	$81	1.25X
#19 NM	$15	1.25X
#29 NM	$12	1.25X

Little Dot's Uncles & Aunts

#1 NM (Harvey)	$125	1.25X
#30 NM	$20	1.25X

Little Lotta Foodland

#1 NM (Harvey)	$131	1.25X

Mad

#10 GD+	$66	1.20X

Metal Men

#1 VF-	$122	43%

Mutt and Jeff New Jokes

#1 NM	$24	1.20X

Pep

#23 VF	$1,025	1.51X

Phantom Lady

#23 GD	$275	2.24X

Planet

#13 VG	$175	68%

Reform School Girls

#nn VG+	$800	3.47X

Sad Sack Laugh Special

#1 NM	$125	1.25X

Sensation

#52 FN	$56	53%
#55 AppGD	$41	1.17X
#60 FN	$71	68%

Spooky Spooktown

#1 NM	$170	1.21X
#19 NM	$30	1.20X

Strange Tales

#1 VG	$800	1.57X
#3 VG+	$195	1.39X

Strange Terrors

#6 NM	$425	1.32X

Stumbo Tinytown

#1 NM (Harvey)	$163	1.25X
#5 NM (Harvey)	$63	1.25X
#7 NM (Harvey)	$50	1.25X
#8 NM (Harvey)	$50	1.25X
#9 NM (Harvey)	$50	1.25X
#10 NM (Harvey)	$50	1.25X
#11 NM (Harvey)	$50	1.25X
#12 NM (Harvey)	$50	1.25X
#13 NM (Harvey)	$50	1.25X

Stuntman

#2 GD	$50	85%

Sub-Mariner

#18 GD	$100	94%
#23 GD-	$90	1.02X

Superman

#10 VG+	$341	69%
#11 FN	$400	75%
#12 VG	$213	60%
#39 GD-	$80	90%
#40 FN+	$175	66%
#41 GD	$60	90%

Tales of Suspense

#39 VG	$475	89%
#40 VG	$200	Guide
#48 NM	$163	68%

Tales to Astonish

#27 FN	$380	52%
#35 FN	$225	75%
#40 NM	$295	82%

Thunder Agents

#2 NM	$160	2X
#2 GD	$11	1.31X
#3 NM	$100	2X
#6 FN	$15	1.31X
#6 VG+	$13	1.73X
#7 NM	$50	1.31X
#13 VG+	$14	1.40X
#15 NM	$52	2X

Undersea Agent

#4 NM	$70	2X

Wendy Witchworld

#1 NM	$125	1.25X
#27 NM	$32	1.60X
#28 NM	$32	1.60X

Wonder Woman

#31 VG	$105	1.01X
#47 FN	$125	1.04X
#49 GD	$46	1.15X

Collectors should note that the opinions expressed in CBM Market Reports are solely those of the individual dealers and collectors who contribute them

(1964) VG $10; Planet Of The Apes #1 Magazine NM $25, #2 Magazine NM $20, #3 NM $20, #5 NM $20, #6 NM $20, #22 VG+ $12, #27 VF $22, Planet Of The Apes JK #118 FN $10, Scooby Doo (Marvel) #1 NM $13, Space 1999 (Power Record) VG $7, Superboy #68 FR $24, Swing With Scooter #33 VG $10, Wagon Train #13 VG $11.50, Wonder Woman #179 FR $5, Young Romance #204 (100 page) GD $8

DAN CUSIMANO
FLYING DONUT TRADING COMPANY
1336 BUTTERMILK LANE
RESTON, VA 20190
dcusimano@usa.net

Internet sales are driving the market now, and many dealers now use small shows merely as buying vehicle to purchase material for resale on the net. Shows are also becoming a dumping ground for the quarter book, which may not be a bad thing—sometimes you just want to read them!

I am running a large collection of high grade Marvels from the 1960s and 1970s on eBay and on the Internet. True NM 20¢ 1970's Marvels are running at a significant premium over Guide. I believe these Marvels are severely undervalued,

MARKET REPORTS

Continued from page 65

as the 20¢ book in NM is generally hard to find. Poor print quality, coupled with relatively weird distribution, keeps the high grade book at a premium. Also rocketing upwards in price are high grade Charltons, and Spire Christian books, especially Hansi the Girl Who Loved the Swastika and Hello, I'm Johnny Cash.

I am just two books from a full set of 30¢ variants. Anybody got a Marvel Tales #68 or Weird Wonder Tales #15 with a 30¢ price?

Golden Age: Action #89 VG (Rainbow cover) $165, All-Star #15 F $450, Batman #71 VG- $84, Detective #71 VG $275, #88 VF+ $500.

Silver Age: Avengers #8 VG $17.25, #63 F $10; Amazing Spider-Man #7 GD/VG $60, #23 VG/FN $28, #28 VG/FN $36, #39 FN $43, #50 VG $48, Iron Man #1 FN $55, #2 FN $18, X-Men #56 FN $20.

Bronze Age: Action #399 VF $12, Avengers #109 NM $22, #111 NM $17, #112 NM $16, #116 NM $27, #117 $21, Batman #247 NM $17, #250 NM $22, Captain America #146 NM $19, #147 NM $27, #151 NM $16, DC 100 Page Super Spectacular #7 NM $51, Fast Willie Jackson #1 NM $27, Hansi the Girl Who Loved the Swastika # NM $17, Marvel Feature #1 NM $52, #2 NM $39, Marvel Team-Up #4 NM $19.50, Marvel Feature #1 NM $52, #2 $39, X-Men #94 NM $490, #98 30¢ variant FN$82, #100 30¢ variant GD $30.

CONRAD ESCHENBERG
18 HUSTIS ROAD
COLD SPRING, NY 10516
914•265•2649
comicart@pcrealm.net

Did four shows in the last seven weeks and things have been very busy. I am selling a very broad variety of comic books: lately Marvel and DC from the '60s are good as always but other companies like Classics Illustrated, Dells, Gold Key, Westerns, Harvey, Archies, Charlton (yes! Charltons are increasing in demand) are selling across the board.

1950's books of all genres are selling well, especially, horror, crime, good girl, and romance. '40's books are real hot again, especially anything in FN/VF or better. Books in FN/VF from the '40s are tough to find and easier to sell. DCs, Timelys, Nedors, and Fox lead the way.

I am getting a lot of action on expensive books as well. High grade copies of Tough Kid Squad #1, Famous Funnies #1, early Flashs, Baseball Heroes #1 double cover of Babe Ruth, Suspense #11, Human Torch #3 (#2) and others sold recently. It is really heating up.

I spend a week in Chicago and three weeks in San Diego which doubles as my annual vacation. This was my 18th consecutive San Diego show this year and I still love it. I get a rush running around the room looking at all the great comics and original comic art. The smell of all that paper sends me in a buying frenzy as each year my purchases go higher and higher.

More and more comic collectors are buying their first piece of original comic art. 1940's and '50's art is in low supply and sells quickly. 1960's art is king, particularly Marvel and DC art. Prime pieces move immediately. 1970's and '80's art is hot, too, with prime pieces moving quickly. Kirby, Ditko, Swan, Infantino, Steranko, Miller, Byrne, Gulacy, Romita, Heath, Kubert, Murphy Anderson, are just a few of many artists in demand. I think the growth potential of the original art hobby is amazing. Most who love comics, will also love owning a piece of their favorite comic.

MONSTERS COLLECTIBLES
CLIFF WIENER & KEN DANKER
10695 LAKE OAK WAY
BOCA RATON, FL 33498
561•488•1874
www.collzone.com/monster

San Diego has come and gone again and once again it has proved that there is a strong buyers market out there for prime material. Also it also proved some other theories!

First, the strongest seller of the show for us was unquestionably Baker romance. At first some customers balked at over Guide prices but after scouring the room returned to buy these impossible-to-find issues. The tough titles like Going Steady sold the fastest as well as any Code approved issues of Teenage Romances. We sold two copies of Teenage Temptations #8 at 6x Guide and one Teenage Romances #38 at 5x Guide. When we started breaking out our Baker material we had six short boxes of the various St. John titles now we're down to two.

Pre-Code Horror and Crime were strong at the show though I am starting to suspect that the horror market has cooled off considerably just by the amount of "Grail" issues (Fight Against Crime #20 and the like) that were in the room all at well over retail. A year ago all these books would have sold but many of the customers for these issues now have them.

Golden Age was strong for us at the show. We sold key Marvel Mysteries such as #4 or nice More Funs that we had just received. One thing is for certain, classic DC and Timely will always sell. They are the foundation of our hobby.

We sold tons of art too, including pages from Watchman and the like. We sold an incredible Eisner Spirit page that I now sorely miss. The original art market is incredible! There are a some very serious collectors out there paying big dollars for the pieces they want and are driving the market significantly. $500-600 Byrne X-Men pages for $1,400! Some covers at $10,000 or more??! Wow.

SOCALCOMICS
JAMIE NEWBOLD & GINO SIRAGUSA
828 CLAIREMONT DR. #124
SAN DIEGO, CA 92111
619•715•8669
socalcom@aol.com

SD ComicCon International proved once again to be incredible. We brought all of our Golden, Silver, Bronze and many Modern Age books. We also brought 150 boxes of $1 books. 60 boxes of $1 books sold so fast I believe some of our employees lost fingers when they got to close to the crowds rifling our boxes to restock.

Superhero Gold-to-the present sold the best, as always. War comics and requests for issues we didn't have, was the second most active category. Romance overtook Westerns in sales. Good Key and Dell TV/Movie covers were more popular than the year before. Crime comics sales were almost nonexistent, a surprise to us. Classics Illustrateds were the standout sellers, with more sales and requests than we expected and we had bulked up in preparation.

I thought Bronze Age books moved slower than we anticipated. Neal Adams ought to chuck whatever he's doing now, and return to Marvel/DC. There's a world of buyers out there that can't get enough of his early '70's work and would buy any comic he touched. The convention, itself, hosted fewer small or one-time dealers. It seems as though the size and cost of the show removes it from access-

bil ty by smal dealers We enjoyed the show and high sales Our purchases at the show wil, end up on our website as we inventory the post-show sa es

JOHN PIRES • VAULT COMICS

PO BOX 257
SOUTH NORWOOD
LONDON, ENGLAND
001144•181•771•8278
auctions@vaultcomics.com

Pulps a m.nefield of covers are yet to oe d scovered .n this corner of the hobby At the moment scarcity (or grade), in re ation to cover art, appear to nave itt e relevance to the pr ce Favoured titles are covers depicting the typical damsel n distress (preferably torture), horror and terror covers, or outstanding Science Fict on scenes When you compare most of these pulp covers to esoteric comics from the '50s (wh ch can at times command multip es of Guide purely on the cover art), there s s.mply no contest! Some of the comic collectors that nave crossed over into pu ps are already on a steep learn ng curve n knowing what to look out for, and knowing what to pay for at $20 or $200+ I believe the market is scream ng out for a Photo-Journal Gu de to pulps !!

More collectors are ventur ng out into 'new' fields Is it just me, or are there signs of 100 Page Spectaculars 'hot-in ni-grade' cool ng off? Silver Age sales n h gh grade nave recently been low, but this is not from no one buy ng - but because genuine high grade copies (strict ly and accurately graded) are sel ing private.y between collectors, and/or just not be ng part-ed with un ess it's for multiples of Guide

Pulps: Dou.o e Detective Feo '41 GD $79, Marvel Science Stories Apr '39 VG $64, Planet Stories #11 FN $66; Thr l ing Wonder Stories Aug '38 GD+ $32

Golden Age: Adventure #48 AppFN- $2175, Camp #1 GD $35, Captain America #51 VF+ $680, Four Color #62 VG+ $325, Gang Busters #1 VG- $64

Atom Age: Gir Confessions #17 VF $63; John Wayne Adv Comics #2 NM- $343, Mask of Dr Fu Manchu #1 GD+ $73, Sad Case of Waiting Room Wil ie #nn, (rare, 14 page promotional comic with W E sner art) VF $343, Th ng #7 GD $122

Silver Age: A S M. #4 VF $597, Alarm ng Tales #1 VF $177, Brave & Bold #2 VG $125, #3 VG+ $97, Chal.engers #8 FN $105, Fantastic Four #53 VF- $96, J I M #84 FN+ $245, Wham O Giant Comics #1 $52

Bronze Age: DC 100 Page Spec #13 FN+ $20, H O M #195 VF- $24, Hu k #181 VF $257, Marve Spotl ght #3 VF+ $26, Planet of the Apes #1 (1970 Gold Key) VF $84, Sabr na Teen Age W tch #1 (1971) VF+ $59, Sinister House of Secret Love #1 VG+ $17, X Men #94, 95 VG+/FN $122 (pa r)

Memorabilia & Original Art: Batman Kel oggs Pop-Tart comics #1-6 VF $96; Human Torch #36, pg.5 Original art $670, Iron Man & Sub Mariner #1 pg 8 Original art $426, Kirby Unleashed (1971) FN- $61, Seduction of the Innocent (HC JK Edition w/dust jacket) VF $105, 1954 'Ca ling Superman' board game $309, The Monster Co or the Creature Book (Wrightson) FN+ $38.

JEFF HINDS

PO BOX 44803
MADISON, WI 53744
800•791•3037

The big story is eBay's new policy on reserve auctions. The message board at eBay has been flooded since its announcement on August 20th to a se ect few sellers who run reserve auctions The postings are 99 999% very negative, there are hundreds (if not thousands) of se lers calling for a boycott A large number of nigh feedback sellers have said they are registering with Amazon, Yahoo, Golds, etc Basically eBay has decided to charge an extra dollar per reserve auct on and set the minimum bid at 25% or more of the reserve If you are a seller you quickly rea .ze the profound negative mplications for your auctions You must either r sk not covering your cost (who is going to do that with qua ity material?) or simp y not sel ng the .tem because the auct on can't get roll ng with that high of a minimum bid

The end result s eBay could become a cyber-rummage sale where only low dollar, low quality tems are to be found I as a seller won't waste my time listing a Batman #4 in VG, when the opening bid has to be $225 You won't get the o ds You need to hook peop e .n with low starting bids and generate outb d notices So I, like numerous other sellers there, wi l only ist items that don't care what they go for, and what do you think that will be? EBay WAS the coolest site on the web because it was cheap, had incredible inventory, had the critical mass of buyers and sellers to make it work and most importantly neatly balanced the needs of buyers and se lers They have threatened all that with this dec.sion They are "out of touch" in the most extreme mean ng of that phrase I just signed up with Amazon Golds, etc

ALAN BAHR • HEROES

469 UNIVERSITY AVENUE
PALO ALTO, CA 94301
650•321•5370
www.heroescomicbooks.com

have to begin this market report with a sincere tip of the hat to the ent re staff of the San Diego ComicCon They all worked very hard (under difficult circumstances) to put together an extremely well organ zed, and fun event And they deserve to get a little creat for a job well done, especially since we're all quick to po nt out when it DOESN'T go right! Attendance seemed very strong this year The aisles were full, the fans were smi.ing, and dollars were flying!

Go den Age Sa es were hea thier than they've been in recent years, Silver Age was moving (with a nudge), and even 1980's books were sell ng (prov ded they were cheap) But the b g winner, without a doubt, was original art! Demand was very nigh, and so were the prices (it reminded me of the nigh grade Golden Age boom of 1995) Covers, primarily Silver Age and 1970s, are lead ng the pack in demand, with some pieces fetch ng as much as ten times last year's pr ces As I said a few market reports back, watch th s segment of the market grow by leaps and bounds over the next s x to twelve months

Overal , it was the most en oyable show I've attended in years! Sa es were good, I bought a ton of art for myself, customers were smi.ing aga n, and it was FUN!

Once aga n, the AACC dinner was the high ight of the show I would urge everyone who has a love for com c books to support this organization .n their efforts to bring the eg-endary com c book creators, and their fans, together Every year there are ess hands to shake, so don't wait Tel these wonderful people how much you've enjoyed their work, and what a thri l t is to final y meet them in person! Trust me, it'll make you fee like a k d aga n!

A few sa es f gures Captain America #105 cover by Kirby $3,000, Jim Aparo Charlton horror cover $350 (cash), Man Bat #1 cover by Jim Aparo $850 (cash & trade), Marvel Premiere #48 page 1 splash $700 (cash), Marvel Premiere #25 cover by Gil Kane $750 (trade),

Master of Kung Fu #66 cover by Dave Cockrum $350 (cash), 3 Superboy & the LSH pages by Greil $125 each (cash), Sgt Fury #3 page 6 by Kirby $500 (trade)

MATT NELSON • COMIC CONSERVATIONS

PO BOX 2335
SLIDELL, LA 70459
504•639•0621
spectre52@aol.com

This has been one of the most rewarding summers in back issue sales we've seen in a long time. It seems that the dealers are moving a little of everything these days. This is due to a combination of things, including the Internet (eBay in particular), a healthy economy, and dealers and collectors both willing to meet halfway to get a deal done. The "Gold Rush" has cooled to a simmer (with still much activity on lower grade material), 1970's books are still strong, Silver is making a resurgence, and esoteric is enjoying some of its most diverse demand ever. Seems that everyone is into a little of everything these days, from pedigreed books and pulps, to original art, to premiums and toys. Diversity has become the way of survival in the local comic store this decade, and it looks like that approach is being used by the back issue dealer as well.

Right now, big changes are occurring in the industry that the informed are aware of, but has yet to seep into the mainstream. There's a lot of things one has to consider in this market over the coming months and years. A "new" grading scale, the growing Internet market (and the diminishing middleman?), and the infamous slabbing. Here's your tip for the month. If this slabbing catches on, anyone with high grade material, particularly mainstream Golden Age, will be seeing some huge profit margins. The influx of private investors that enter this market will be substantial, and they'll be looking for anything high end. So hold on to your Mile High Star Spangled!

Recent Sales. Adventure #46 VG- $600, Detective #51 GD/VG and #54 GD pair $350, #114 VG+ $150; Star Ranger #3 VG $125, Star #6 GD $75, Pep #20 VG/FN $350 (9x Guide, super undervalued), Whiz #2(1) appVG+ $5,000, Mystery in Space #4 VG $104, #58 FN/VF $112.50, #60 VG+ $31, Strange Adventures #112, 119, 122 all in FN $82, Action #271 FN/VF $37, Tales of Suspense #13, 18, 23, 28, 34 all in the VG range $125

JOEL THINGVALL • THE NOSTALGIA ZONE

3149 1/2 HENNEPIN AVE. S.
MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55408
612•822•2806
nostzone@spacestar.net

The money was flowing in San Diego, as it has throughout the summer. And not just from big name Hollywood stars and directors sighted in the aisles of the Comic-Con International showroom. Collectors are back with wallets stuffed with small bills and buying up loads and loads of genre titles like war comics, westerns, movie and television tie-ins.

At Comic-Con International we sold more Archies and Harveys than ever before, and it was nice to see youngsters (and girls) pulling out stacks of Betty & Veronica, Jugheads, Wendy, and Little Dot.

Fanzines also are big time. Charlton Bullseye #1 VF/NM $50, #4 VF $25, Buried Treasure #2 VF/NM $30, Don Rosa's C&S #2 VF $25, Overstreet Price Guide #9 in hardcover VF $100. Interest continues strong in Marvelmania and FOOM items, and those oversize Marvel Indexes sell in the $25-$50 range (not to mention the comic-sized ones going for $20 a pop in grade). Highlight in San Diego was looking at a complete run of the old ditto zine Batmania that an area collector had salvaged. Unread issues 30+ years old. Wow!

A few more interesting sales during the summer included Avengers #4 VG/FN $350, Cerebus #8 FN/VF $23, #8 VF/NM $35, #11 NM $30, Clown Comic (from the '40s) #1 FN/VF $35; Comico Primer #2 VF/NM $100, DC Special Series (Jonah Hex) #16 NM $50; Grendel (Comico) #3 VF, $100 each, Journey Into Mystery #79 FN/VF $90; Lois Lane Annual #2 VG/FN $40, Phantom Stranger #1 (Silver Age) FN $50, Tales to Astonish #9 FN/VF $200.

Books from the late '70s are going gangbusters, often pricing at $20 or more in grade if they have 20¢ or 25¢ covers. We just got a run of Famous Monsters that sold out in two weeks. Alex Toth, Neal Adams, and Steve Ditko were the most asked-for names. Jack Kirby books are still popular, too.

Kudos to San Diego Comic-Con folks and the American Association of Comicbook Collectors (AACC) for bringing in Jerry Robinson.

Sam Glanzman was also a featured guest and I hope everyone had the chance to see his art display. It was great! Jim Steranko was displaying his art too and was very accessible. Carmine Infantino (another AACC guest) and Julie Schwartz added their depth of knowledge to the history of the medium to anyone gathered around them willing to listen. Irv Novick, Irwin Hasen, and Arnold Drake also had a wonderful time meeting new fans of their work. The market is strong, strong, strong and ACTIVE.

STEVE FISHLER & VINCENT ZURZOLO, JR.

METROPOLIS COLLECTIBLES
873 BROADWAY SUITE 201
NEW YORK, NY 10003
212•260•4147

Both Chicago and San Diego proved that we have a very strong marketplace today. There has been a strong resurgence of interest in key Disney books and a continued demand for Timelys. We were pleased with record sales of Disney titles such as Comics and Stories and some Four Color. Marvel Mystery sales were also exceptional. Where's the warehouse that we can order these from?

Even though we were actively buying at both shows, we could have/should have spent more! We were lucky to obtain two high grade collections of '50s and '60s DCs and Marvels along with some high grade Superboys, Adventure, Action, and Superman issues.

We always enjoy seeing our customers in person at the big shows. Often times we speak on the phone and this is a great chance to place a face with a voice!

Recent Sales. Batman #1 (restored) $8,000; Fantastic Four #1 FN/VF $2,500, Superman #1 (restored) $8,000; Suspense 3 GD/VF (w/Xerox centerfold) $2,500; Walt Disney's Comics and Stories #31 VG $890.

ROBERT BEERBOHM COMIC ART

PO BOX 507
FREMONT, NE 68026
402•727•4071
beerbohm@teknetwork.com

The big news out of this year's Tri-monium Price Guide Advisors meeting, at least for me, and maybe some of you is next year's Guide

is going to list approximately 400 "key" underground comic books for the first time. I found myself "volunteered" to be part of a small group to compile this historic addition to the Overstreet Price Guide. It's so long overdue, it simply isn't funny anymore. Finally, Robert Crumb, Gilbert Shelton, Joel Beck, Richard Corben, Vaughn Bode, Dan O'Neill, Dave Sheridan, Fred Schrier, Jack Jackson, Frank Stack, Rand Holmes, Gary Hallgren, Booby London, Jay Lynch, Skip Williamson, Art Spiegelman (Pulitzer Prize winner for a comic book) and so many other greats of the comics world will be treated as "real" comic book creators. Maybe many sellers of comic books will finally have a "clue" as to what to do with them. I certainly hope so.

I was sadly amazed at some of the comic sellers at the meeting who said "Barks doesn't sell." I find them easy to sell when priced below current Guide. There are plenty of Barks collectors out there who, when confronted with high prices in the Guide, simply purchase the various Gladstone packages to acquire their fix. Hence, one needs to understand that concept and price your Barks comics accordingly.

EBay Sales (with an average grade of VG+)- Al Capp's Wolf Gal #2 1952 $16; Amazing Spider Man #11 1964 Ditko! $89, America's Greatest #5 $128, Astro Boy #1 $102, Blackhawk #97 VF+ $57, Doc Savage pulp August 1936 $94, Exciting #50 $55; Fight #53 $51; Football Thrills #1 1951 $28, Foxy Grandpa-Merry Pranks 1905 $82; Hit #3 $280, Ideal #4 (1949) $44, Jumbo #149 $44, Little Lulu #45 $35, Little Orphan Annie #1 1926 C&L $30, Marvel Team Up #1 High Grade! $22, Mel Allen "The Voice of The Yankees!" $85; Nyoka #14 $51, Prize Comics #58 $20; Silver Surfer #2 VF+/NM $81, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs #925 1938 $53, Speed #43 $37, Starting #24 (1943 War Cover) $112, Superman 3D (1953) $40, Thrilling #10 (1940) $87; True Crime #6 (1949) $46, Walt Disney's C&S #108 1949 $24, Wonder Woman #21 (1947) $89; Zegra #3 1948 $86

The San Diego ComiCon has come & gone once again. I attended my first one in 1971 and have faithfully participated in its evolution for three decades now. I noted that most of the "big ticket" comic books languished without buyers. Must have been at least three dozen Batman #1s there, a dozen Action #1s, and at least 50 Showcase #4s.

Customers definitely shopped around this year before parting with *(Continued on page 70)*

THE MATT SCHIFFMAN REPORT

Silver Age: Most Improved Player!

Once again, the turnout for San Diego set a new record for attendance, although many of the larger players decided to stay away again this year.

Reported sales were brisk, but there was a certain lack of high grade books. John Fairless had a great collection of Horror books and collectors responded with enthusiasm. The two main buzzwords were "pulps" and "original artwork," and dealers reported a larger percentage of interested buyers over last year.

Golden Age: Key issues and low grade Timely were the books that everyone wanted, and these moved quickly, but were not to be found in quantity. Golden Age collectors have learned from the Silver collectors over the past five years "when the market is quiet, it is time to buy," A great selection of Gold was available, but what was not available told the story about what is still quietly in high demand.

Blackhawk #9 VG- $320; Captain America #68 GD $189, #23 VF/VF+ $1380; Clue #7 FN/VF $200; Detective Comics #72 NM/NM- $895; Flash #36 NM $925; Hopalong Cassidy #2 GD $140; Mystery #1 GD $140, #2 GD $85.

Atom Age: Once again, these books commanded the majority of attention at San Diego as collectors tried to ferret out a few elusive issues. The guys at Monster Comics brought in a new group of Matt Baker books and were rewarded by a still responsive market. Pre-Code horror continues to be in high demand, and the quality material (i.e. high grade) disappeared quickly.

Adventures Into Weird Worlds #7 FN/FN+ $145; All Top #11 VF+ $950; Alley Oop #18 VF/NM $180; Claire Voyant #4 FN $170; Dear Lonely Hearts #2 VF $88; Eerie #1 ('51) FN $220; Heart Throbs #3 VF $75; Kid Komics #10 VF+ $550; Love Letters #22 NM $65; Madhouse #1 FN $95.

Silver Age: The Most Improved Player of 1999. As the pendulum swings back to Silver, collectors are beginning to look once again at their favorites and finding that the rules have changed over the past year. Demand is growing for House of Mystery and House of Secrets and these are difficult to find in grade... especially 10¢ers. Albeit small, the DC Big Five war book collectors continue to ignite a huge demand for these books.

All American Men At War #39 FN $95; Amazing Spider-Man #42 NM/MT $200; Atom and Hawkman #39 NM $55; Batman #190 NM $48; Captain America #117 NM $75; Hulk #102 VF/NM $125; Journey into Mystery #83 GD $385, #83 VF/NM $3,450; Metal Men #1 VF/VF+ $320; Our Army At War #83 FR/GD $210; Peanuts #1 (1963) VF/NM $195.

Bronze Age: The hunt is still alive for certain high grade 1970's books... let's hope they're out there to be found. I'm personally amazed at the passion and fervor collectors have for those elusive Whitmans, Charltons, Warrens, Marvel Magazines, and end-of-run DCs or Marvels. These often inexpensive but truly rare books have fanatic collectors constantly on the hunt. Also ultra high-grade Bronze continues to bring many multiples of Guide and collectors have only backed off from a handful of the higher priced issues. But the strongest sellers with the highest demand are clearly the DC Gothic Romance books. These titles are on fire with NM commanding astonishing multiples!

Batman #260 VF/NM $32; Beyond the Grave #1 NM $18; Captain Cannuck #4 (2nd) NM $145; Dark Mansion of Forbidden Love #1 NM- $190; DC 100pg Super Spectacular #10 NM $65; DC Special Series #18 NM $12; Jughead Jones Comics Digest #1 NM $28; Kull #1 NM $22; Legion of Superheroes #1 VF/NM $19; Shazam #1 NM $18; The Invaders Annual #1 NM $14.

And finally, a Hawaiian traveler's tip. As if you ever needed an excuse to visit the islands, Ted at Gecko Books in Honolulu is an excellent reason to make the trip. He has 2 stores with incredible selection.

COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE

Advertising Rates

The Best Ad Rates in Town!

FULL PAGE AD
(7 1/8 WIDE X 9 5/8" TALL)
$400.00

HALF PAGE HORIZONTAL
(7 1/8 WIDE X 4 5/8" TALL)
$300.00

THIRD PAGE VERTICAL
(2 1/4 WIDE X 9 1/4" TALL)
$235.00

QUARTER PAGE
(4 5/8 WIDE X 3 3/4" TALL)
$190.00

BIG/LITTLE AD
(BUSINESS CARD 3 1/2 WIDE X 2" TALL)
$75.00

Contract advertisers—
ask for your discount.

Above rates are for black & white camera ready ads. Include payment with ad copy and forward to the address below. The ad deadline is the 10th Rate Card and further information available upon request.

COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE
P.O. BOX 180700
CORONADO • CA • 92178-0700

CONTACT: CBM ADVERTISING

☎
619 • 437 • 1996
FAX
619 • 437 • 1993

MARKET REPORTS

Continued from page 69

their hard earned money. I found that sales picked up each day with Sunday being my best day.

Many old friends were encountered through the week in San Diego. Some commented on it seemed the old comic book section of the dealers room seemed at an all time low. Prices for a booth are astronomical and has totally squeezed out the "little guy" from participating in dealing comics there with any kind of ease. For that one reason alone, I have found I prefer setting up a large display at smaller regional shows where table space is much more affordable and one doesn't have to give up thousands of dollars of one's best stuff to cover display space. After all, it is "net" profit which counts.

San Diego Sales. Thing #14 VG (Ditko)$350, Fight #23 VG+ $65, Hero ic #49 VF Toth $25, Jumbo #60 FN+ $125, #144 FN+ $50,#157 FN $40, Katy Keene #4 VG $65, #14 VG+ $60,17 VG $45 KK Annual #4 VF- $100 Katy Keene Fashion Book #1 Fine $100, King Kong 1933 Herald VF+ $1000, National #17 FN & Crandall drew Uncle Sam together on this one VG- $100, Our Army At War #79 FN+ $40, Prince Valiant Cross Bow Game 1948 $150, Romance Trail #3 VG Toth Kinstler $50, Sgt Rock's Prize Battle Tales Annual #1 FN+ $100, Sprit section 11/5/44 $10.

Opinions expressed in CBM Market Reports are solely those of the individual dealers and collectors who contribute them. Seasoned hobbyists are acutely aware that prices vary based on geographic location, time of year, and a number of other marketplace factors.

NAIMAN REPORT CONT. FROM PG. 64

Marvel Price Variants... Who's Smirking Now?

15" x 14" sold for $4,050.

Carmine Infantino (who hadn't been to a San Diego show in 20 years) was a guest of All-Star Auctions and the American Association of Comicbook Collectors (AACC). "Carmine had a fabulous time," commented Nadia Mannarino, "he had no idea how huge the San Diego show had become! He was thrilled to meet and greet old colleagues as well as the fans that stopped by to say hello!"

To many long-time collectors, a "bargain priced key comic book" might sound oxymoronic! I was aware of a particular sale at the San Diego show that caused me to look at the Price Guide and examine some prices. Looking at the Guide's Top 100 Golden Age books, I picked out the top 10 number one issues and compared the price of their number two counterparts to see the resultant spread. A fascinating picture developed. When you rank order the titles by #1 issue valuation the Top 10 are 1) Action, 2) Superman, 3) Marvel, 4) Batman, 5)Whiz, 6) Flash, 7) Captain America, 8) Detective, 9) New Fun, and 10) Captain Marvel Adventures.

However, when you compare the prices of the number two issues to the number one issues a gaping spread develops. Here are the top five spread leaders: Whiz $63,000/$4,000—15.75X; Superman—$130,000/$9,700—13.4X; Flash—$57,000/$6,000—9.5X; Action $185,000/$20,000—9.25X; Captain Marvel Adventures $28,000/$3,300—8.48X—the rest of the books fall from 5.75X to 2.3X. Clearly, if one were to bet on the future (that the gap would close on the valuation of these #1 and #2 books), five of these with large distances between the #1 and #2 values would appear to be a "bargain." Of course, when talking about big dollar amounts like this, there are very few players out there to take advantage of this situation.

The transaction that lit my fuse over this analysis was the sale of the Larson copy of Pep #23, the second appearance of Archie Andrews, who, next to Dick Clark, is the oldest teenager in America! Pep #22 (December 1941) is the introduction and first appearance of Archie, Betty, and Jughead. Issue #23 recently sold for $1,025. Are you telling me that this book is worth close to 10 times less than the #23?? Looks like a bargain to me!

Until next month, good hunting! ■

AACC's Batman Bash

The American Association of Comicbook Collectors 7th Annual National Meeting was held on Saturday August 14th, 1999 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel during the Comic Con International: San Diego. The sold out event's featured guest was Hall of Fame Honoree, Jerry Robinson.

In attendance were Golden and Silver Age notables Jim Steranko, Neal Adams, Carmine Infantino, Stan Lee, Chuck Cuidera, Russ Heath, Ramona Fradon, Irv Novick, Julie Schwartz, Sam Glanzman, Irwin Hasen, Arnold Drake, and Murphy Anderson. A touching tribute to Robinson was presented by Hasen, Steranko, and Adams.

Master of ceremonies for the evening was outgoing AACC Vice President Bill Howard. Presented with AACC's Fandom Achievement Awards were recipients David Armstrong, for his ongoing documentation and filming of Golden Age and Silver Age creators, and Shel Dorf, recognized for his pioneering work in the establishment of the San Diego Comic Con.

One of the highlights of the evening was an expanded original art auction. Proceeds from the event goes towards underwriting sponsorships and expenses for the AACC's guest artists and creators at next year's convention. Some of the highlights of the auction included: a color Batman jam piece measuring 24" by 28" rendered by Moldoff/Sprang/Anderson/Adams/Robinson which sold for $5,300; a Don Rosa full color satire recreation of the cover of "Duck-tective" #71 for $900; a Joe Giella color portrait featuring Batman and his enemies sold for $500; two Carmine Infantino pen and ink pieces for $200 each; and a Bat Mite and Bat Hound action figure made specially for the dinner sold for $200. All in attendance received a limited edition copy of the Batman jam piece along with a gift bag of magazines and mementos of the evening.

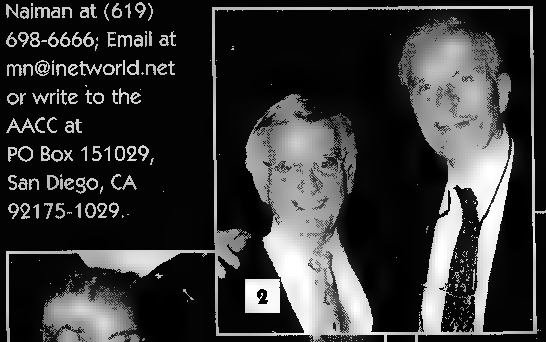
Throughout the evening a free raffle giveaway was conducted. Gifts included Batman graphic novels and a matched set of leather bound Overstreet Price Guides.

The AACC recently held elections for new officers and directors and the following collectors have been elected: Gary M. Carter, President; Pat S. Calhoun, Vice President; Michael Naiman, Secretary Treasurer. The new Board of Directors include Jon Berk, Keith Contarino, Beth Holley, Bill Howard, Tom Horvitz, and Michelle Nolan.

Next year's expanded dinner (AACC "The Last Great EC Reunion") will feature a tribute spotlighting the EC creators, writers, artists, colorists, and contributors on the occasion of the publication's 50th anniversary. Dinner tickets will be limited to those who are current dues paying members of the AACC.

For further information about memberships, please contact Michael Naiman at (619) 698-6666; Email at mn@inetworld.net or write to the AACC at PO Box 151029, San Diego, CA 92175-1029.

KEY TO SCRAPBOOK PHOTOS:
1) Russ Heath; **2)** 1999 Hall-Of-Fame honoree, Jerry Robinson & newly elected AACC President, Gary Carter; **3)** Peter Merolo & master of ceremonies, Bill Howard; **4)** Carmine Infantino with Arlen Schumer holding CBM #70 color section; **5)** Julie Schwartz & Burt Simmons; **6)** Shel Dorf receives AACC Fandom Appreciation Award from Michael Naiman; **7)** Bill Howard with Helen & Murphy Anderson; **8)** Dave Stump, Maggie Thompson, & Russ Cochran; **9)** John Snyder; **10)** Bruce Hamilton & Don Rosa; **11)** Scott Shaw! & Sam Glanzman; **12)** Arnold Drake & Todd Severin; **13)** Irwin Hasen, Stephen Barrington, Beth Holley, & Carmine Infantino; **14)** Neal Adams; **15)** Stan Lee, Jon Berk, & Jim Steranko; **16)** Tara Jankner, Steve Fishler, & Pat Kochanek; **17)** Jerry Robinson; **18)** Irwin Hasen; **19)** Joe Mannarino & Joel Thingvall; **20)** David Armstrong & Michael Naiman; **21)** Charlie Jackam & Carmine Infantino; **22)** Phil Barnhart, Peter Klee, and Scotty Moore; **23)** Harry Matetsky; **24)** Jerry Robinson & Jim Steranko; **25)** Jerry Robinson & Neal Adams; **26)** Irv Novick


2

1

3

Text by Michael Naiman
Photos courtesy Jon Berk

1999 AACC Banquet

4

5

6

7

8

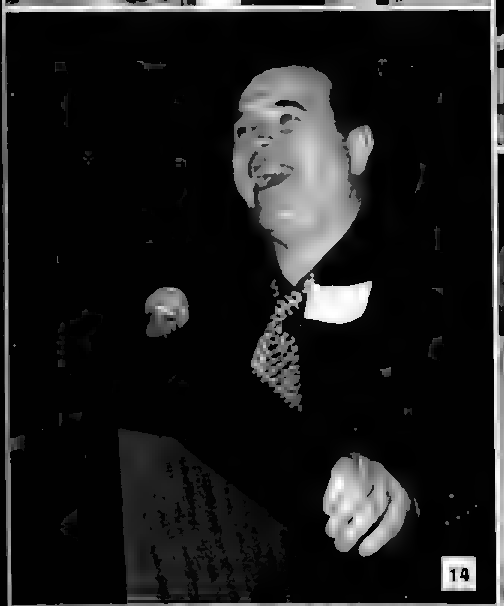
9

10

11

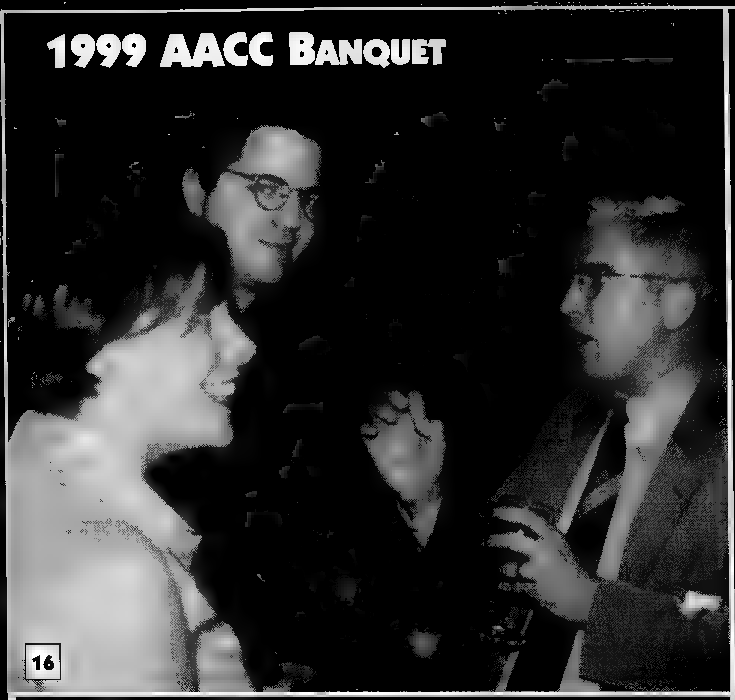
12

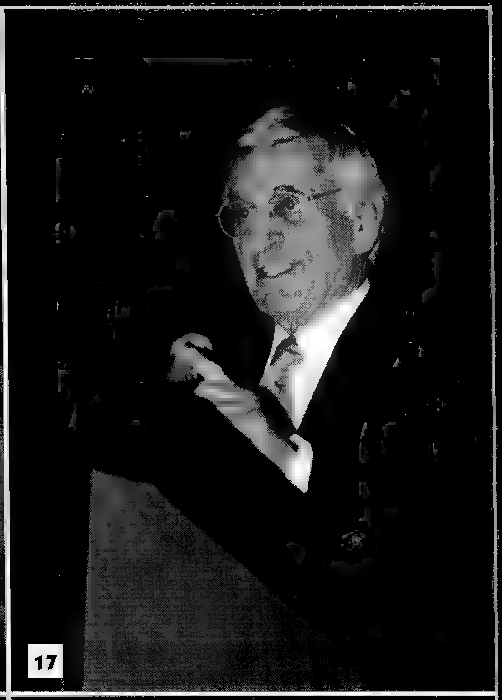
13

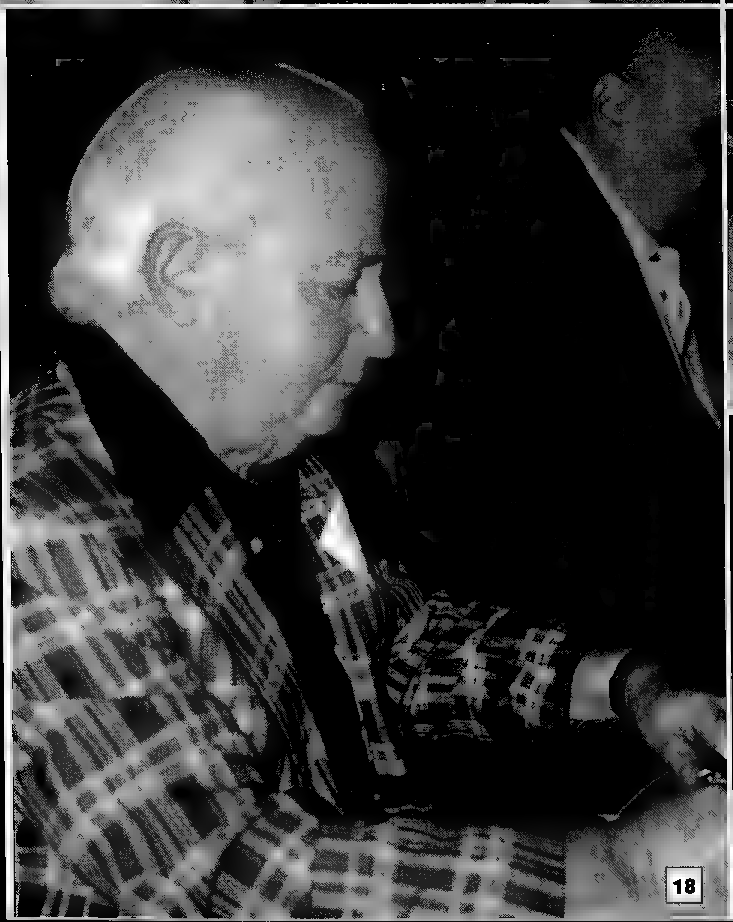

14

15

1999 AACC Banquet


16


17


18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

Quite Simply...

THE LARGEST

Golden Age
&
Silver Age

Catalog
in
Fandom

James Payette
Rare Books
& Comics
P.O. Box 750
Bethlehem, NH 03574

(603) 869-2097
FAX (603) 869-3475

Send $1
For a unique selection
of nostalgia in my latest
catalog.

▼▼▼

If you're
selling...
We buy at the most
competitive
percentages.
Please call
or write
for a
quote.

MARKETPLACE MAIL

Continued from page 11

Finally I disagree with Michelle Nolan's assessments about the rarity of late '40s and early '50s vs. 68-page Golden Age comics from 1938-1943 or so. I think this is off the mark generally, but I'll concede there are exceptions. (Please ask Michelle to write as we're both "old timers" and I'd love to discuss the above point with her. Otherwise she's a fine writer and all of her articles are fun to read.)

You see Gary I'm worried that a "Revisionist Counter Revolution" has been bubbling. The 1938-1945 period in our hobby I feel will forever be "the cornerstone" and with good reasons. The obsession with the S.A. and recently the Atomic Age is, I hope, temporary and that the spotlight will again focus on the centerpiece of the hobby, Golden Age. (I also feel that the obsession with collecting Golden Age by the cover art only is disheartening to say the least!) Best,

Stephen B. Keisman, Florida

A few "beaters"

Really liked your August issue on Batman. "The Legend of Batman" the color feature you ran was really cool. Thanks for all those color covers you did... in the story and on the last page.

I am that handicapped guy who is always asking for donated comic books to read (condition, of course, is unimportant). So if you could find it in your heart to publish this letter, maybe a few CBMers will toss a few "beaters" my way. I would forever be in your debt. Sincerely,

John L. Slaughter
4621 Westwood Dr. NW, Canton, Ohio 44709

Tec #165

Saw the letter that Mr. David Loesch wrote in CBM #70. I have the answer for him after looking in my comic book collection. The story, "The Strange Costumes of Batman" was printed in November 1950, Detective Comics #165. It was later reprinted in the 1961 Batman Annual #1, which was (annual) reprinted earlier this year. I am glad to help another Batman fan. PS I have been collecting Superman and Batman comics for 42 years. I enjoy reading CBM very much.

Ed Kuhlmann, Jr., Illinois

Batman Annual #1

I'm sure you'll get many replies to David Loesch's question regarding Batman being shot in the trunk of a car. I remember it well since "The Strange Costumes of Batman" was reprinted in the 1961 Batman Annual #1. Unfortunately, no credits were given (as to issue #) I don't know if they were added to the recent reprint, which may still be available. (I didn't buy the reprint, since I still had the original.)

I consider the Batman Annual #1, "The Best of the Best" (of annuals) as I was coming online to the Batman titles in the early '60s; just as I consider CBM a winner in the '90s and beyond. (You got my vote in the CBG "Comics of the Century" voting for "Favorite Publication about comic books.")

To paraphrase the dying Spock in the Star Trek movie: "I am, and always will be, a Batman fan." Even though I was disappointed in "The Darkness/Batman" story (but not art) from DC/Top Cow. I am again looking forward to a year of Jeph Loeb and Tim Sale on Batman: Dark Victory! Great Batman issue! (Of course, I expected no less.)

Tony Kowalik, Illinois

Didn't deter my disappointment

I am happy you ran Arlen Schumer's "Graphic History of Batman" in its entirety and in color, but your editorial warning about having to run it so SMALL didn't deter my disappointment. It was too small! Can't you run a slightly bigger color section SOMETIMES?

Ethan K. Mann, Missouri

I'd love to have more color, but it's so darn expensive and we run CBM on a shoestring budget as it is. Sometimes you just have to make the tough decisions and bite the bullet... and that's what I did. Perhaps some time in the future, we could publish a treasury-size CBM... well, I can dream can't I?

Harder to find

Found the DC Giants list in CBM #69 very helpful. I would have liked it even more if the contents (table of contents) of each Giant were also listed.

A guide for the DC digests is sorely needed. You should indicate which of the DC digests had new material. A full table of contents would be nice but you probably will not have room to print them. Those DC digests are hard to find which seems to confirm the obvious that smaller things will be harder to find.

John De La Cruz, California

Oh for those halcyon days

Have just finished reading CBM #60 and as a new reader of your magazine, I thought I should write and compliment you on what a great job you are doing for us comic fans.

As a 62-year old fan who was born on the other side of the pond, we had a hard time trying to find copies of "American Comics" or "10 centers" as we affectionately called them. But we worked at it by swapping and begging our local market secondhand bookstore to put to one side any comics he may take in.

My hobby lasted until 1958 when I got married and moved home, and without a thought of the future, gave my collection to a young local lad. How many fans have made this same mistake? Over the last ten or so years I have rekindled my interest in comics... buying all the DC Archives books plus any other reprint material I could acquire. (My thanks to Bud Plant for this, and also Russ Cochran for the great EC collec tion to which I subscribed.)

I am one of those fans who does not put money as my purpose of reading comics... but pure nostalgia. I can still remember sitting on the playground floor reading my first 10 center which was a coverless copy of Batman. It was about 1942 and I was five years old (oh for those halcyon days).

I think my most striking memory of those early days was when I got hold of a copy of All Star Comics featuring a foe called Solomon Grundy... it sent shivers down my spine. I don't recall its number but know it will be a long time before DC Archives get around to printing it, and was wondering if any of your readers has an old tatty copy they would sell me. I would be eternally grateful. In the meantime, keep 'em coming... you're doing a great job.

Roy Carne, Cornwall, England

I couldn't agree more

The San Diego show this year appeared to be another big success. Although it seems that other forms of entertainment (original art, collectible cards, toys, etc.) are becoming more and more prominent at the Con, it was good to see such a fine selection of Golden Age books on dis play. Many dealers that I spoke to expressed satisfaction with strong sales. I am already looking forward to next year's show.

As I mentioned to you, at WonderCon earlier this year I got lucky and managed to locate the San Francisco copy of Flash #5. In the hands of a long time private collector, I located the issue at a booth buried in the very back of the dealers room. Needless to say, I was thrilled to pick up the earliest known example (so far) of the San Francisco pedigree. I mention this only to show that treasures can still be found at the conventions if you're willing to look hard enough for them.

Also, I read in the letters column (#71) that Dave Lounsberry asked for more MLJ coverage in the magazine, and I couldn't agree more. MLJ was one of the top producers of the period, and their titles like Pep, Zip, Top Notch, etc., are among my very favorite runs.

Keep up the good work on CBM... every issue is a joy to explore.

Steve Carey, via E-mail

Besides being a longtime friend and all-round nice guy, Steve Carey has also done a number of significant research articles... including an introductory article on MLJ back in Overstreet's Comic Book Quarterly #5 and his excellent and insightful treatment of Centaur Comics was back in CBM #4!

The "Don" collection

As usual, I enjoyed reading my new issue all the way through, but I especially enjoyed Jon Berk's article on Lamont Larson and the Larson collection.

I did not start reading comics until 1939 when I was three years old... it's a long story about my collection of comics before 1942, but starting in '42 my dad became a Greyhound bus driver and started bringing home comics 40 or 50 at a time. In 1944 some friends and I counted over 6,000 comics in my room. I would have as many as ten or more of the same issue, so I used to set up a tent in my front yard and sell the extras for 5¢ each. We moved to Dallas in 1945 and the comics were left behind.

I only wish that I had written "Don" in the corner of each one and had kept all 6,000, then you would be reading about the famous "Don" Golden Age collection....

Don Maris, Texas

Nice to hear from you Don! You may not know it, but I've always felt you are one of the 'unsung heroes" of early fandom... especially your role in organizing and running comic conventions. In case you haven't heard a thanks lately for all your efforts... let me give you a sincere and heartfelt tip 'o the hat right here in the pages of CBM!

Not H-B's Pebbles?

We are writing in regards to PEBBLES (not Hanna-Barbera's Pebbles and BamBam from the Flintstones). Between the years of 1945-1950 this comic book was published. The only name that we have relating to this comic book is Al Grogman (phonetically pronounced Growgman). We are not sure if he is the artist, author, or publisher. We are also not sure if the spelling of the last name is correct. As you can see we have very little information on this comic book, but it is very important that we find all the information that we can.

To briefly explain this, Al Grogman was a friend of our late grandfather's. During the years of 1945-1950 he had a comic book published named Pebbles and the main character was based on our late grandfather, Irving "Peb" Stone. We are trying to get a copy of the few books that came out for both our father and aunt by Christmas time. If your readers have any information that can help us out please let us know via CBM. We cannot stress how important this is to us. Thank you.

Rachel A. & Kristin M. Stone, Illinois

uncirculated

1st series CBMs for sale...

$15 each

CBM #4, 6-10, 13-15, 17-20

Price includes P&H (U.S.),
California residents add sales tax
Make check/MO to: Gary & Lisa Carter

COLLECTING MEMORIES
PO Box 180700
Coronado • CA • 92178
(619) 435-9407

COMING SOON! CollectingMemories.com

Here's a Great Back Issue Deal!

(Offer ends Dec 1st, 1999)

CBM #52, 60, 65, 66...
and CBM #68
(the limited run promotional copy)
Plus Special Edition #2
Cover A (from Starting #49)
with the 1st set of Gerber Stickers!

ALL 6 ISSUES FOR JUST $26!

That's a $38.70 value...
AND WE'LL PAY THE POSTAGE!
(on U.S. orders)

CA, MO, & MD residents add sales tax
MC/VISA orders: (619) 437 1996

COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE
P.O. BOX 180700
Coronado • CA • 92178-0700
619•437•1996

MARKETPLACE MAIL

Digest Scarcity

Hello, I love your magazine and indulge in hours of delight reading every issue. I have a question as to the scarcity of a few comic digests I was recently able to acquire.

One of the gems is a fine condition digest of Steranko's classic "Chandler," published by Byron Press in 1976 and titled "Fiction Illustrated" Vol. 3.

The other acquisition I made are two fine condition comic digests of "Green Lantern/Green Arrow" and are black and white reprints of GL/GA by O'Neil and Adams. #1 reprints GL/GA 76-77 & #2 reprints 78-79.

Both digests are first prints and published in 1972 by Paperback Library Any info would be great. Thanks,

Nathan Surget, via E-mail

Although the two you mention aren't particularly tough to find, I find the whole topic of comic digest scarcity quite intriguing. I've collected these small-size books for decades and I've found many of them to be strangely elusive. Perhaps it can be explained by the fact that digests in general do not usually have the comic reader as its primary target audience. Instead, they are aimed at grocery shoppers, pharmacy patrons, and customers of sundry purveyors... an audience that would be less aware that they usually contain reprints and might be more likely to buy the material in a format unlike a comic book. All this means that they are usually purchased by non collectors who would not ordinarily save them, and that comic collectors did not usually buy them... so naturally they are somewhat difficult to find. As for value, I feel that many late Silver and early Bronze digests are still unknown to mainstream hobbyists and therefore severely underpriced. The good news is... they're still quite a bargain for those lucky enough to find them in decent shape!

Charlton's Bronze Age implosion

Just finished reading CBM #71 and really enjoyed the article on the Bronze Age implosion! of DC and Marvel If one thinks DC's and Marvel's implosion was big one should look at Charlton's Bronze Age implosion... it was probably "twice" as big! Charlton I believe canceled about 70% of their titles during the mid to late '70s!

It was nice seeing you and talking to you at San Diego. I took a look at the gentleman sitting at your booth and I said to myself, "I recognize that man that's Bruce Hamilton," and I even saw John Snyder, and Carol Overstreet at your booth if my eyes were not playing tricks on me. I over heard Hamilton mention to a gentleman he was talking to that many of the old timers have been going to the San Diego Con for more than a quarter of a century which made me chuckle because a quarter of a century sounds like such a long time! I hope you enjoyed the Con, Gary.

I bet Jon McClure was thrilled about getting one of this year's CBM Research Excellence Awards, but who wouldn't be. Take care!

Bill Alexander, via E-mail

What to call the post-Bronze Age?

Have been a fan of your excellent magazine since issue #15, and will continue to subscribe as long as you keep on publishing. Here are two or three thoughts that have been brewing for a while, and I'd like to share them with fellow collectors It seems that pulps have become an adjunct to our hobby, and rightfully so, as they display a wealth of painted covers to stimulate our imaginations, to a degree which even the best of painted comic covers can scarcely equal.

How about an article on a similar paper product... the American paperback of the '40s and '50s which features wonderful painted covers dealing with hard-boiled detectives, teenage hoodlums, and crime scenes, etc. and even share a common company, Avon if I'm not mistaken. Also on this note, some time ago I came across a box of lurid men's magazines. Readers may remember some of these on the racks from their childhood (which we weren't suppose to see). They date from the 1950s and I was astonished to see some of them with the familiar Atlas globe, and the publisher of these mags was no other than Martin Goodman!

Some examples of these mags were Men, and Sport Trials, with articles such as "I lived with the Amazon Women," "A Virgin for the Snake God," "He Cut off her Head with a Carving Knife," "I fought the Swamp Tiger," etc. These magazines also feature wonderful painted covers worthy of the pulps! Do any readers know anymore about this unmentioned aspect of the Atlas publishing company?

On another note.. lately, there seems to have been a debate brewing over what to call the post Bronze Age era. I think we are talking about the period roughly from the mid to late '70s and on

into the early '90s. The major companies experienced a drop in popularity, with many of the traditional outlets no longer carrying all or even any of the titles. This coincided with a rise in the dark, brutal, and violent atmosphere in comics, beginning with Miller's DareDevil and Byrne's Wolverine, and culminating with such events as the crippling of Batman and the "death" of Superman. How about calling this period the Dark Age?!

Finally, I've noticed the odd letter mentioning this, but you know how the squeaky wheel gets the grease! Please give us more balance between the two major companies, Marvel and DC. How about some feature stories on Timely, Atlas, and the mainstream Silver Age Marvel characters most of whom are almost 40 years old?! We've seen scarcely any good articles on Iron Man, Thor, Dr. Strange, The Avengers, Sgt. Fury, Ant/Giant Man, or even Conan. Surely these should be higher on the list, than Swedish Superman comics. Thanks for listening.

Kevin McSheffrey, via E-mail.

We're working on your suggestion Kevin (check out this issue for example), but our content is always a function of what collectors are willing to write about. So where are all the Marvel aficionados who can write about your favorite company? I hope your letter moves them off the dime to write for us! As for Swedish Superman comics... to a DC fan's eye, those were totally cool! (By ymm-inny!)

Something had to give

Enjoyed Sterling Dashiell's article on the Bronze Age Implosion in Comic Book Marketplace #71. I remember well the day in July of 1978 when I came home to find a new issue of The Comic Reader in my mail. Above the Martian Manhunter cover was a bold headline which read "DC Axes 23 Titles." It was such a shock that I immediately tore the issue open to read all the hoary details

While the statistics in Sterling's article are quite informative, they do not begin to tell the whole story. Included in the twenty three titles mentioned in the TCR headline were several which were announced, but were never published. Others, including some potentially interesting reprint titles, perished after one issue.

An interesting side-effect to the sudden cancellations was that a tremendous amount of inventory material had to be shuffled around with most of it getting used somewhere—eventually Adventure Comics was one of several titles that became bimonthly "Dollar" books following the implosion.

It serialized the Deadman story that was originally intended for Showcase and the Death of the Earth-2 Batman story that had been scheduled for All-Star Comics.

A three-issue "World of Krypton" series had also been scheduled for Showcase, but had been delayed when the release of the film, Superman: The Movie was postponed to December. DC's editors wanted the series to be on the stands at roughly the same time as the movie. This was not to happen. World of Krypton was finally published as a separate three-issue title during the summer or fall of 1979. This was the first time (other than occasional one-shots and specials) that a title was published with the intention of ending it after a certain number of issues. It is ironic that DC's implosion would give birth to the "limited series" phenomenon.

During that same period, Marvel was publishing a phenomenal number of reprint titles, as well as the plethora of mediocre new material mentioned in Sterling's article. They published a full page house-ad promoting subscriptions which listed all of their titles in small type. It was as if Marvel was trying to maintain its position as the world's largest comics publisher through sheer volume of titles. In the difficult market of the '70s, something had to give.

Randy Smith, via E-mail

Toiled anonymously for years

Issue #70 was another fine issue of CBM (especially following up the issue on my favorite group, the JSA).

Re: David Loesch's inquiry: Robin takes over in The Strange Costumes of Batman from Detective 165 (11/50). It was reprinted three times, in Batman Annual #1, the recent reprint of the annual, and Batman #259. Batman uncharacteristically did not realize that he was dripping, and that the criminals would see him. Hmmm. Nonetheless, it was always one of my favorite Batman stories, with great Sprang art.

Re: Arlen Schumer's Graphic History of Batman, I think that more of a mention should have been made of some of the earlier artists, especially Jack Burnley, who did the marvelous Sunday strip, Lew Schwartz, and Shelly Moldoff. Not to mention some fine work by Jim Mooney, and a host of others, in the early years. Also, I feel that Bill Finger was not given his due, or, for that matter, some of the other writers that toiled anonymously for years.

The Robinson interview refreshingly dealt with different aspects of Jerry Robinson's career, and also showcased some of his fine later art. I would love to see a collection of his work. I took a comic art course with him in the New School back in the '70s, and learned a lot about page layouting

Also, the Neal Adams article was welcomed, especially seeing the thumbnail sketches of his work. Keep up the good work!

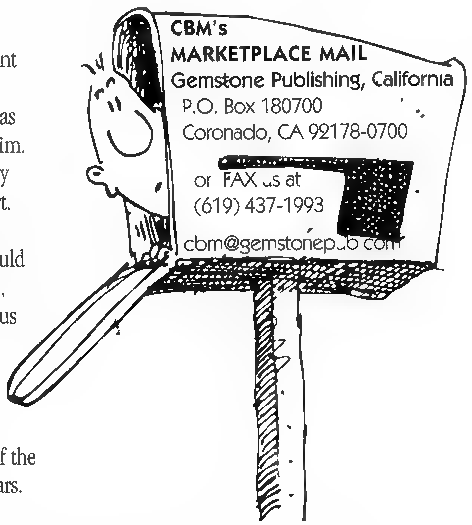
Paul A. Zuckerman, via E-mail

On a roll

Another great issue . you're on a roll. The only problem I had was your post-wave Adams selection of artists you highlighted. Wrightson, Kaluta, and Sienkiewicz hardly did any Batman, their more influential work was done on other characters, and Simonson did some nice work on Batman, but he did much better work on Manhunter, Dr. Fate, and Metal Men. The real excitement came from Englehart, Rogers, and Austin. They brought the character to life like no one since. One of my fondest ComiCon memories was sitting at Marshall Rogers table all day listening to him talk about the work he did on those issues. Those books meant a lot to me and to actually meet one of the persons involved in the making of them made me treasure them even more, thanks Marshall.

Frank Strysik, via E-mail

My thanks to everyone who wrote in this time, your comments and suggestions really matter to us. Send your communications to:
or E mail us at: cbm@gemstonepub.com



FANTASY MASTERPIECES

PAPER ART RESTORATION

ASKS AN IMPORTANT QUESTION:

WHY HAVE THIS...

WHEN I CAN GIVE YOU THIS!

OUR SERVICES INCLUDE ALL PHASES OF PAPER ART RESTORATION, FROM THE SMALLEST TEAR TO MAJOR PIECE REPLACEMENT.
ASK ABOUT OUR OTHER RESTORATION SERVICES.

OUR RATE IS $55.00 PER HOUR. ESTIMATES ARE FREE & QUESTIONS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME.

FANTASY MASTERPIECES

P.O. Box 881 Kelso, WA 98626

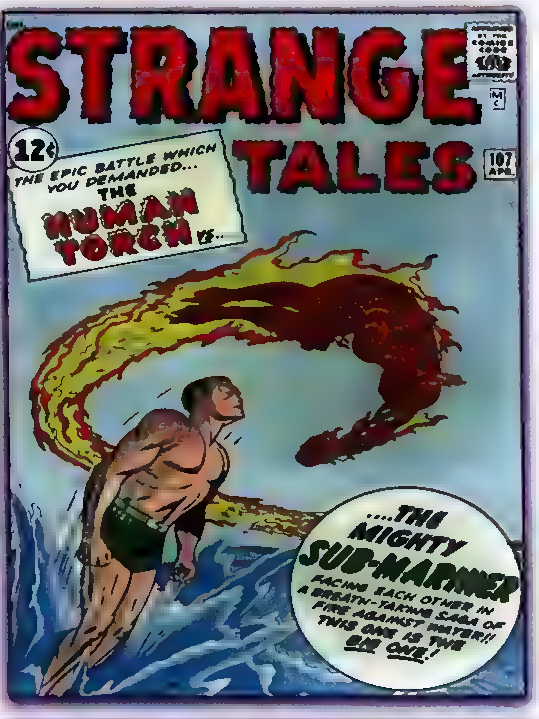
Phone: (360) 577-0351
Fax: (360) 577-0351
e-mail: mcwilson@cetnet.net

10 YEARS PROVIDING THE ABSOLUTE BEST IN PAPER ART RESTORATION TO EVERYONE WHO LOVES COMICS!

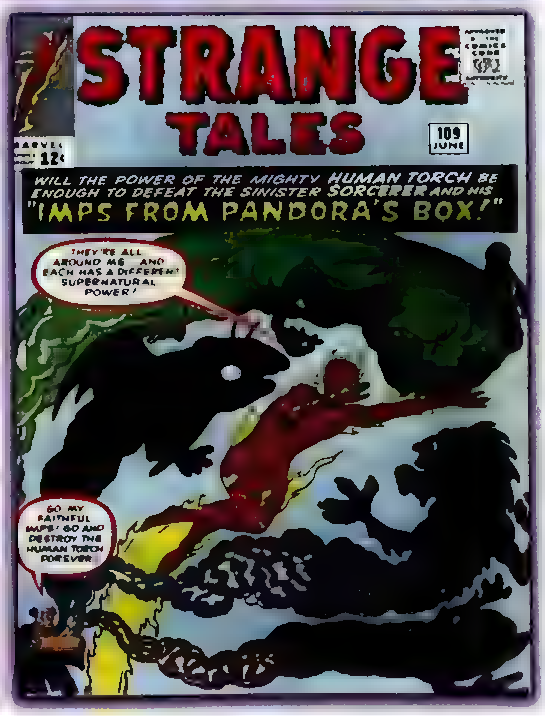
COLOR GALLERY

STRANGE TALES & HUMAN TORCH

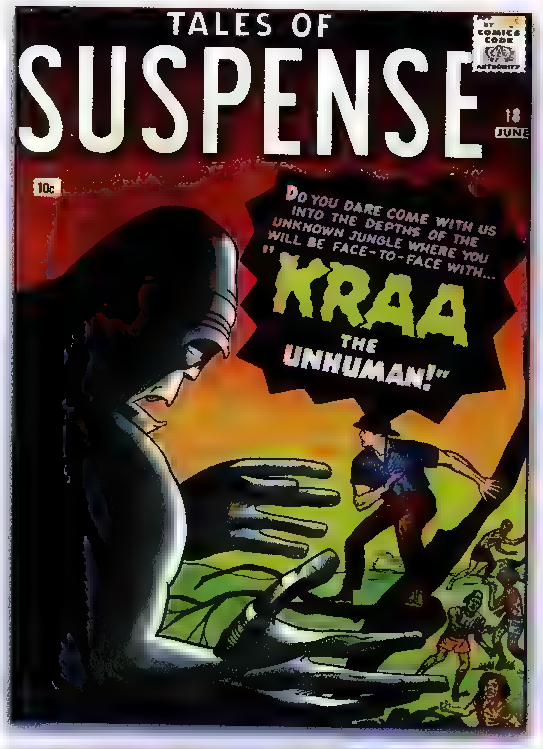
STRANGE TALES
12¢
HUMAN TORCH
PRISONER OF THE 5TH DIMENSION!
103 DEC
MORE WATER!! SOON THE HUMAN TORCH AND HIS FLAME WILL BE FINISHED FOREVER!!


STRANGE TALES
12¢
THE EPIC BATTLE WHICH YOU DEMANDED... THE HUMAN TORCH VS...
107 APR
...THE MIGHTY SUB-MARINER
FACING EACH OTHER IN A BREATH-TAKING SAGA OF FIRE AGAINST WATER!! THIS ONE IS THE ONE!

STRANGE TALES
MARVEL 12¢
the HUMAN TORCH meets "THE PAINTER OF A THOUSAND PERILS"
100 MAY
GET HIM, THING! WE MUST DESTROY THAT DEMON!
ONLY I COULD MAKE THE FANTASTIC FOUR TURN AGAINST THE HUMAN TORCH!


STRANGE TALES
MARVEL 12¢
109 JUNE
WILL THE POWER OF THE MIGHTY HUMAN TORCH BE ENOUGH TO DEFEAT THE SINISTER SORCERER AND HIS "IMPS FROM PANDORA'S BOX!"
THEY'RE ALL AROUND ME... AND EACH HAS A DIFFERENT SUPERNATURAL POWER!
GO, MY FAITHFUL IMPS! GO AND DESTROY THE HUMAN TORCH FOREVER!

Strange Tales #103 (Dec 1962); #107 (Apr 1963); #108 (May 1963); and #109 (Jun 1963)

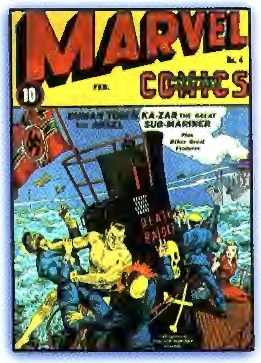


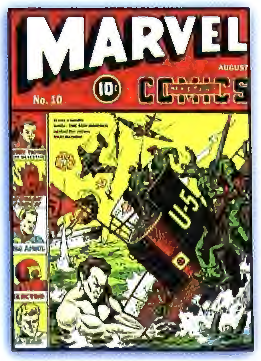
WORLD OF
FANTASY
17
APR.
WHO WAS THE GUARDIAN OF THE STARS?
UNLESS I PULL THIS LEVER, AN ENTIRE WORLD WILL PERISH!
NO! IF YOU DO PULL IT, IT WILL MEAN OUR DEATH! YOU CAN'T...!

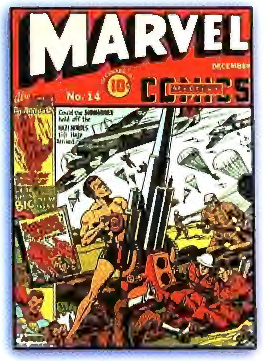
Tales of Suspense #18 (Jun 1961); **Tales to Astonish #14** (Dec 1960); **World of Fantasy #17** (Apr 1959); and **Journey into Mystery #58** (May 1960)

AMAZING ADVENTURES
4
10¢
THERE HE STANDS!! IT IS... X!!
DESTROY HIM!! BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE!
YOU ARE ALREADY TOO LATE, MORTALS!! NOTHING CAN STOP ME NOW!
"I AM X"

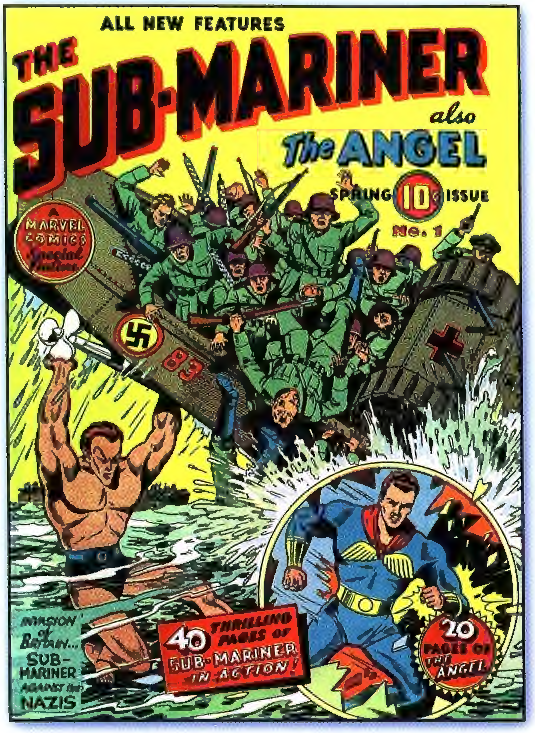
Journey into Mystery #66 (Mar 1961); **Strange Tales #79** (Dec 1960); **Amazing Adventures #4** (Sep 1961); and **Strange Worlds #4** (Jun 1959)

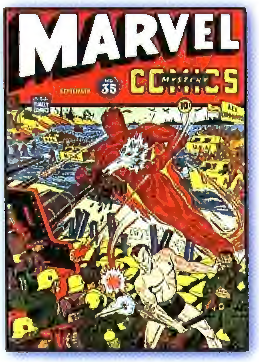


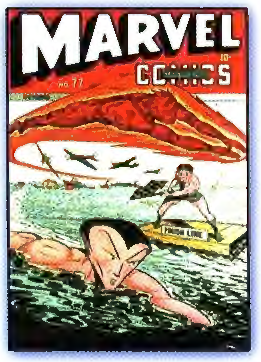


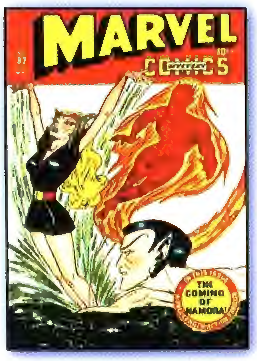


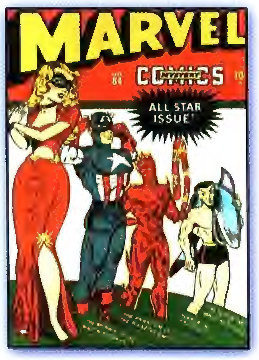
Human Torch #2 (#1, Fall 1940); #3 (#2, Winter 1940); #4 (#3, Spr 1941); **Marvel Mystery** #4 (Feb 1940); #9 (Jul 1940); #10 (Aug 1940); and #14 (Dec 1940)





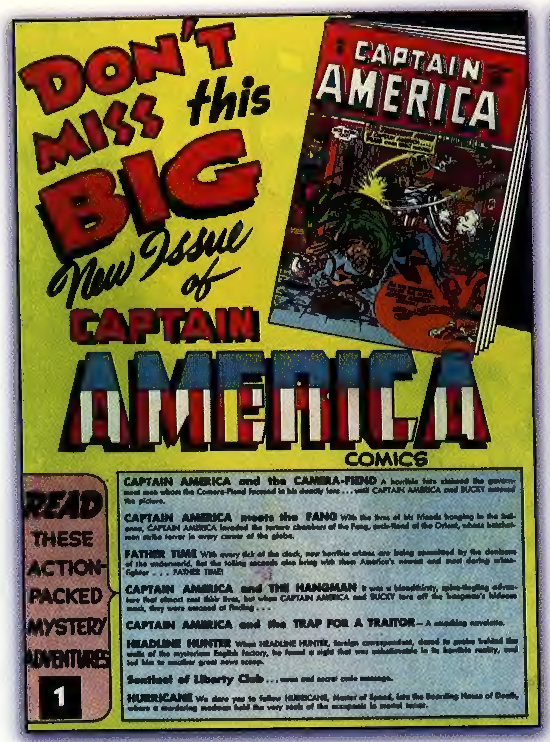






Sub-Mariner #1 (Spr 1941); #2 (Sum 1941); #3 (Fall 1941); **Marvel Mystery** #35 (Sep 1942); #77 (Oct 1946); #82 (May 1947); and #84 (Oct 1947)

TIMELY HOUSE ADS


DON'T MISS this BIG New Issue of CAPTAIN AMERICA COMICS
CAPTAIN AMERICA
READ THESE ACTION-PACKED MYSTERY ADVENTURES
CAPTAIN AMERICA and the CAMERA-FIEND
CAPTAIN AMERICA meets the FANG
FATHER TIME
CAPTAIN AMERICA and THE HANGMAN
CAPTAIN AMERICA and the TRAP FOR A TRAITOR
HEADLINE HUNTER
Sentinel of Liberty Club
HURRICANE
1

1. Back cover of **Sub-Mariner #2** house ad for **Captain America #6**

GET YOUR NEW ISSUE OF MARVEL COMICS
Featuring the HUMAN TORCH and TORO in Another Exciting Adventure that will THRILL you!
NOW ON SALE!
MARVEL
PLUS MANY OTHER GREAT FEATURES
LOOK FOR THIS COVER ON YOUR NEWSSTAND
ASK FOR MARVEL NO.19
2

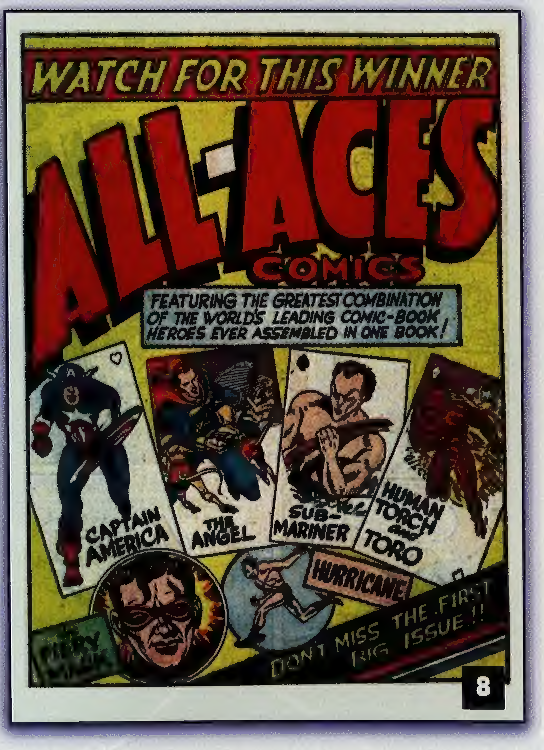
2. Interior ad from **Captain America #3** for **Marvel Mystery #19**

As New Exciting AS TODAY'S NEWS!
MARVEL COMICS No.26!
MARVEL
No. 26
THRILLING TALES OF MYSTERY AND SMASHING ADVENTURE WHICH NEVER LET YOU DOWN!!
THRILL TO SUCH FAMOUS CHARACTERS AS— The HUMAN TORCH SUB-MARINER TERRY VANCE VISION ANGEL and OTHERS!
DON'T MISS THE HUMAN TORCH'S MOST AMAZING ADVENTURE AS HE AGAIN MIXES WITS WITH THE EVIL PARROT, MASTER OF CRIME, IN—"The PARROT RETURNS"!
GET YOUR COPY TODAY!!
3

3. The back cover of **Sub-Mariner #3** features a promo for **Marvel Mystery #26**... one of the relatively few issues with a Sub-Mariner cover

WHAMO! THIS ISSUE IS DYNAMITE!
WILL THE HUMAN TORCH AND TORO BE ABLE TO STOP THE MADDENED SUB-MARINERS PLAN TO BECOME SUPREME DICTATOR OF THE WORLD?
60 SIZZLIN SUPER-ACT THRILL-PACK PAGES OF ONE STORY!
THE HUMAN TORCH
SUB-MARINER ATTACKING GIBRALTAR WITH HIS SHARK SOLDIERS!
SIDE-SPLITTING SITUATIONS!
GET THIS NOVEL-LENGTH COMIC BOOK Now!
THE MEDITERRANEAN RUN DRY—AND THE ITALIAN FLEET STUCK IN THE MUD!
ONLY 10¢ — On Sale at All Newsstands!
4

4. Historic interior house ad for **Human Torch #5** (Fall 1941) from **Sub-Mariner #3**



5. Interior ad for **Marvel Mystery #16** from **Human Torch #3 (#2)**

6. Interior ad from **Sub-Mariner #3** promoting **Mystic Comics #7**

7. Interior ad for **Marvel Mystery #20** from **Human Torch #4 (#3)**

8. Rare ad for the never-published Timely title, **All-Aces Comics** from **Human Torch #4 (#3).** The contents were eventually published as **All-Winners #1**

ALL ART © MEG